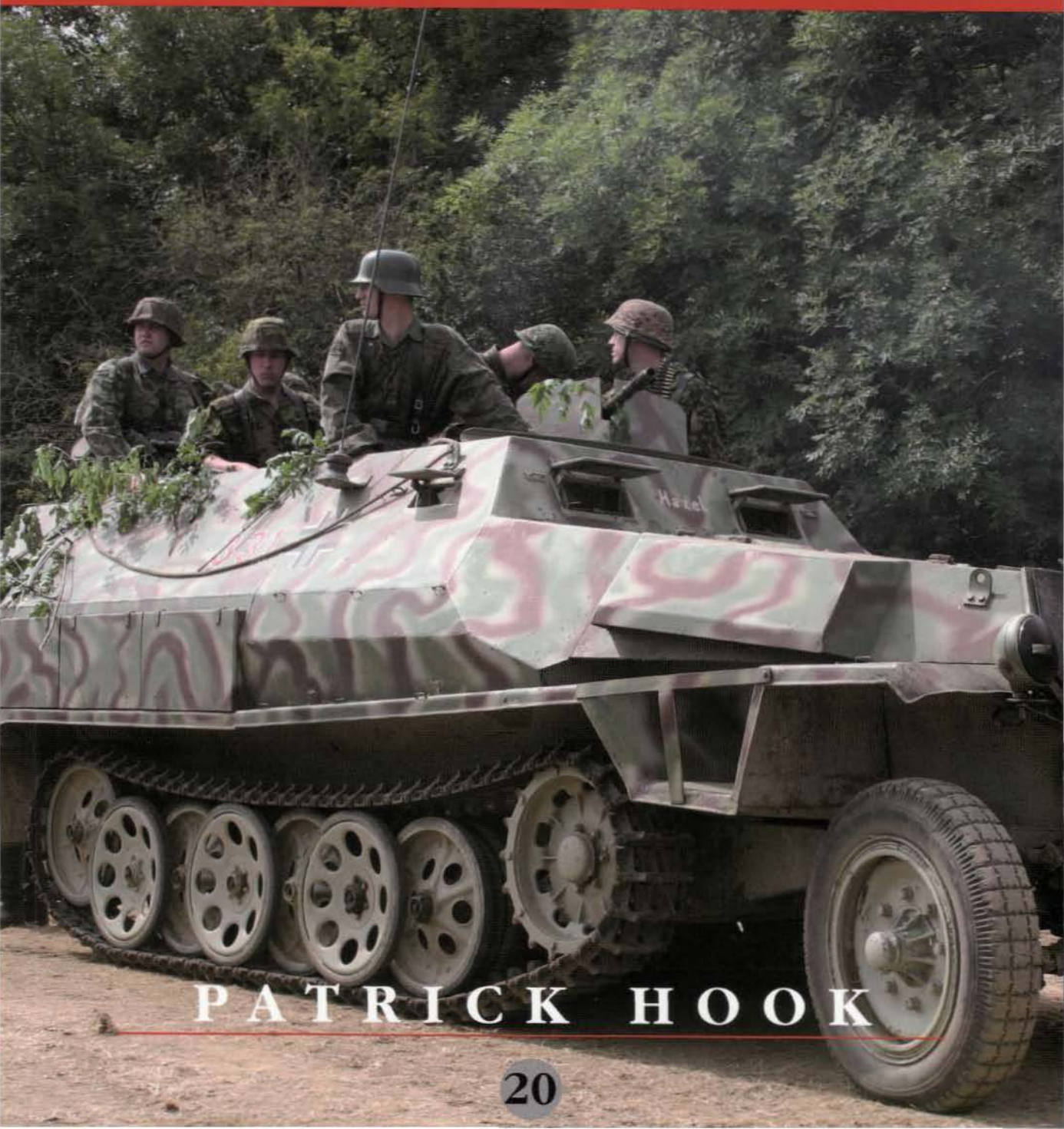
SPEARHEAD

HOHENSTAUFEN

9th SS Panzer Division

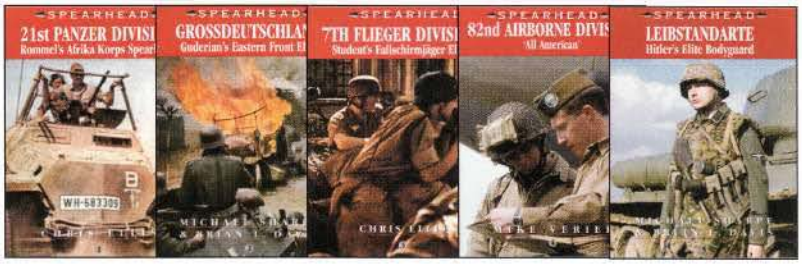


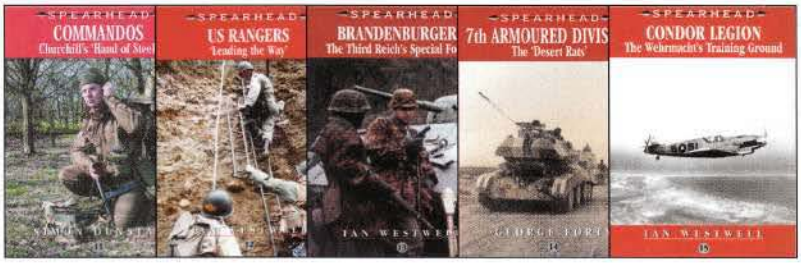
PATRICK HOOK

20

SPEARHEAD

The story so far





Ian Allan PUBLISHING

1: 21st Panzer Division – Rommel's Afrika Korps Spearhead
C. Ellis ISBN: 0 7110 2853 2

2: Grossdeutschland – Guderian's Eastern Front Elite
M. Sharpe & B. L. Davies ISBN: 0 7110 2854 0

3: 7th Flieger Division – Student's Fallschirmjäger Elite
C. Ellis ISBN: 0 7110 2855 9

4: US 82nd Airborne Division – All American
M. Verier ISBN: 0 7110 2856 7

5: Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler – Hitler's Elite Bodyguard
M. Sharpe & B. L. Davis ISBN: 07110 2922 9

6: 1st Infantry Division – Big Red One
I. Westwell ISBN: 07110 2923 7

7: U-Boat Flotilla – Dönitz's Atlantic Wolves
A. Konstam & J. Mallmann Showell ISBN: 0 7110 2957 1

8: 1st Marine Division – The Old Breed
I. Westwell ISBN: 07110 2958 X £12.99

9: Das Reich – Waffen-SS Armoured Elite
M. Sharpe & B. L. Davis ISBN: 0 7110 2975 X

10: 2nd Armored Division – Hell on Wheels
S. Smith ISBN: 0 7110 2976 8

11: Commandos – Churchill's Hand of Steel
S. Dunstan ISBN: 0 7110 2977 6

12: US Rangers – Leading the Way
I. Westwell ISBN: 0 7110 2978 4

13: Brandenburgers – The Third Reich's Special Forces
I. Westwell ISBN: 0 7110 2979 2

14: 7th Armoured Division – The Desert Rats
G. Forty ISBN: 0 7110 2988 1

15: Condor Legion – The Wehrmacht's Training Ground
I. Westwell ISBN: 0 7110 3043 X

16: 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam – The 'First Team'
S.Dunstan ISBN: 0 7110 3042 1

17: 5th Gebirgsjäger Division – Hitler's Mountain Warfare Specialists
Michael Sharpe ISBN: 0 7110 3045 6

18: PT Boat Squadrons – US Navy Torpedo Boats
Angus Konstam ISBN: 0 7110 3044 8

All titles in the 'Spearhead' series are: 248mm x 185mm 96pp inc colour PB £12.99

ORDER VIA POST, FAX OR E-MAIL:

Ian Allan Publishing Mail Order Dept
4 Watling Drive,
Hinckley, Leics LE10 3EY
Tel: 01455 254450 Fax: 01455 233737
E-mail: midlandbooks@compuserve.com
Or order on-line from Ian Allan's new website:
www.ianallansuperstore.com

FOR ORDERS FROM THE USA, CONTACT:

Casemate Publishers and Distributors,
LLC 2114 Derby Road, 2nd Floor,
Havertown, PA 19083, USA
Tel: +1 610 853 9131
Fax: +1 610 853 9146

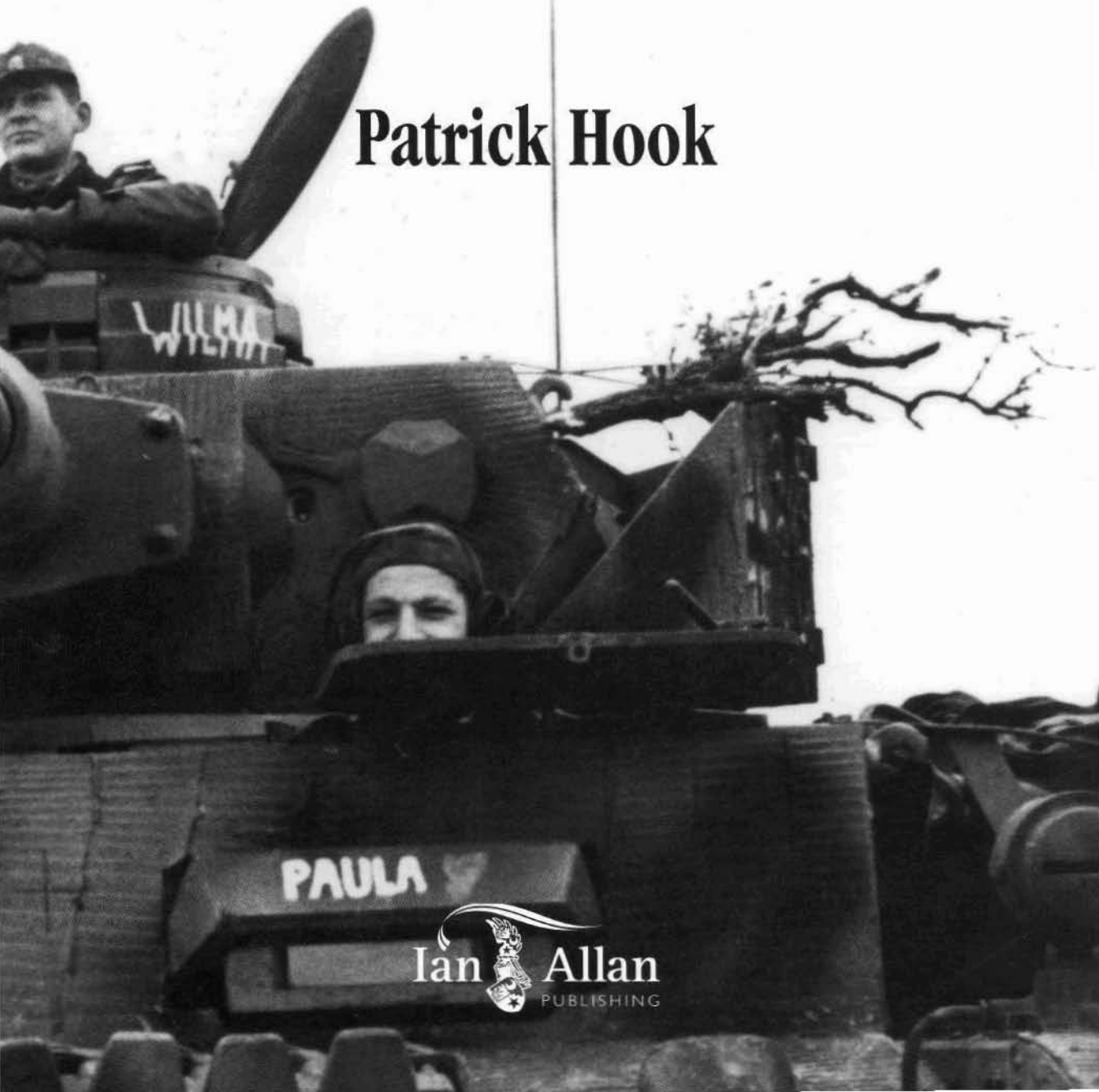
SPEARHEAD

HOHENSTAUFEN
9th SS Panzer Division

SPEARHEAD

HOHENSTAUFEN
9th SS Panzer Division

Patrick Hook



Ian Allan
PUBLISHING

TABLE OF COMPARATIVE WEHRMACHT RANKS		
Army (Heer) Rank	**Air Force (Luftwaffe) Rank**	**Waffen-SS Rank**
Grenadier	Flieger	SS-Schütze
Obergrenadier		SS-Oberschütze
Gefreiter Obergefreiter Stabsgefreiter	Gefreiter Obergefreiter Hauptgefreiter Stabsgefreiter	SS-Sturmmann SS-Rottenführer
Unteroffizier	Unteroffizier	SS-Unterscharführer
Unterfeldwebel	Unterfeldwebel	SS-Scharführer
Fähnrich		
Feldwebel	Feldwebel	SS-Oberscharführer
Oberfeldwebel Hauptfeldwebel	Oberfeldwebel	SS-Hauptscharführer SS-Stabsscharführer
Oberfähnrich		
Stabsfeldwebel	Stabsfeldwebel	SS-Sturmscharführer
Leutnant	Leutnant	SS-Untersturmführer
Oberleutnant	Oberleutnant	SS-Obersturmführer
Hauptmann	Hauptmann	SS-Hauptsturmführer
Major	Major	SS-Sturmbannführer
Oberstleutnant	Oberstleutnant	SS-Obersturmbannführer
Oberst	Oberst	SS-Standartenführer SS-Oberführer
Generalmajor	Generalmajor	SS-Brigadeführer
Generalleutnant	Generalleutnant	SS-Gruppenführer
General der	General der	SS-Obergruppenführer
Generaloberst	Generaloberst	SS-Oberstgruppenführer
Generalfeldmarschall	Generalfeldmarschall	
	Reichsmarschall	Reichsführer-SS

Acknowledgements
Photographs via TRH Pictures, Simon Dunstan (where credited) and Ray Bonds
Design: Compendium Design/Danny Gillespie
Maps: Mark Franklin

Note: Internet site information provided in the Reference section was correct when provided by the author. The publisher can accept no responsibility for this information becoming incorrect.

Previous page: *Hohenstaufen* PzKpfw IV Ausf H in France during 1944.

First published 2005

ISBN (10) 0 7110 3064 2
ISBN (13) 978 0 7110 3064 0

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

© Compendium Publishing, 2006

Published by Ian Allan Publishing Ltd

an imprint of Ian Allan Publishing Ltd, Hersham, Surrey KT12 4RG
Printed by Ian Allan Printing Ltd, Hersham, Surrey KT12 4RG

Code: 0601/A2

Visit the Ian Allan Publishing website at www.ianallanpublishing.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

CONTENTS

Origins & History 6

Ready for War 9

In Action 14

Equipment, Markings and Camouflage 64

People 82

Assessment 90

Reference 92

Index 96

Glossary

Abteilung	detachment
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
Armeegruppe	Army Group
Aufklärungs	reconnaissance
Fallschirmjäger	parachute troops
Flak	AA guns (*Flieger Abwehr Kanone*)
Heer	army (not SS units)
Heerestruppen	independent army units
Kampfgruppe	battle group (KG)
Landser	line infantryman
Litzen	collar patch
LSSAH	*Leibstandarte* SS Adolf Hitler (1st SS Panzer Division)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei — Nazi Party
OKH	Army High Command (*Oberkommando des Heeres*)
OKW	Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*)
Pak	anti-tank gun (*Panzer Abwehr Kanone*)
Panzerjäger	anti-tank units
PIAT	Projectile, Infantry, Anti-Tank
PzKpfw	*Panzerkampfwagen* (tank/AFV)
RAD	*Reichsarbeitsdienst* (National Labour Service)
Schirmmütze	peaked cap
SdKfz	*Sonderkraftfahrzeug* (special purpose vehicle)
Stahlhelm	steel helmet
StuG	*Sturmgeschütz* (assault gun)
StuH	*Sturmhaubitze* (assault howitzer)
VGD	Volksgrenadier division
Waffenfarben	colour on collars etc, denoting branch of service
Wehrkreis	war district

ORIGINS & HISTORY

Below: Friedrich (Frederick) I Barbarossa (c.1123–90), Holy Roman Emperor, King of Germany and Italy: he and his grandson Frederick II were the greatest of the Hohenstaufens under whom German culture and power waxed strong. They were favourites of Hitler and the Nazis — as was shown, of course, by the codename for the invasion of Russia.

On New Year's Eve 1942, Hitler agreed to the formation of two new divisions for the Waffen-SS. These were the 9th and 10th SS Panzergrenadier Divisions. The 9th was later given the name *Hohenstaufen*, and its sister, the 10th, became *Frundsberg*. Formed in 1943, *Hohenstaufen* was given the number 9 simply because it was the ninth division to be created in the Waffen-SS. The name Hohenstaufen was a homage to one of Germany's ancient noble families, a dynasty of the Holy Roman Empire which provided several kings and emperors between the years 1138 and 1254. The earliest known head of the family was Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa, the Count of Buren, who died in 1094. His son, Friedrich II, built a castle at Staufen near Lorsch in Swabia which was called Hohenstaufen; he later changed his surname to that of his castle. Friedrich II was one of Hitler's favourite historical personalities, and it is believed this was why the family name was used for the 9th Panzer Division. Both Friedrichs are of particular importance to German history but Barbarossa — as with Arthur in British myth and legend — is said to be sleeping in the mountains awaiting Germany's direst need.

The SS or *Schutzstaffel* was originally formed as Hitler's personal protection unit in 1925. One of its main roles was to take care of internal German security, and in line with the Nazi political ideal, in the early days it only took true Aryan candidates. As time went on and manpower became shorter, however, this rule was relaxed. The Waffen-SS was formed by Heinrich Himmler in December 1940, when it was created out of the *Leibstandarte*, the *SS-Verfügungstruppe* and the *Totenkopf Standarten* as a third branch of the SS. It represented the true military part of this large and politically complex organisation, and while it was initially intended to act as security for the homeland, it was not long before Hitler ordered his elite to the front line.

The other two parts of the SS were the *Allgemeine-SS* (General SS) which served a political and administrative role, and the *SS-Totenkopfverband* (SS Death's Head Organisation). Hitler put his own men in to command the Waffen-SS as he had fallen out with many of the regular army's high-class senior officers who saw him as an uncultured upstart. As a result he wanted his new SS army to become the military's elite formation, and so he heavily favoured it with all the best troops and equipment. He also ensured that the Waffen-SS retained strategic control over its actions, although it did come under the day to day tactical control of the OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*). In many of the biggest conflicts of the war the Waffen-SS played a major role — either leading the way into battle or, as the tide turned against the Nazis, holding furious rearguard actions to help other units get away to safety. By the end of the war the Waffen-SS numbered nearly 600,000 men, although at one time it reached a peak of 900,000 ranged over 41 divisions. Around half of these were non-Germans who had been recruited either as volunteers or by force.

Although some of the SS units perpetrated atrocities on civilians or prisoners, this was by no means the case for all of them. *Hohenstaufen* troops, for instance, are not

recorded as ever having committed any such acts and, indeed, were commended for their good treatment of Allied prisoners at Arnhem.

When the 9th and 10th divisions were first formed they were designated as mechanised infantry (*Panzergrenadier*) divisions rather than as full armoured (*Panzer*) divisions, although technically they had sufficient armour to qualify. At this early stage neither had been assigned their famous names — they were simply referred to by their divisional numbers. For the SS to decide to form new divisions was one thing, but finding sufficient recruits to man them was quite another. The German armed forces had been fighting in one form or another for seven years, and after the massive losses incurred on the Eastern Front, there were few men of the right ages available. Due to the severe shortage of manpower, the SS forced large numbers of people to 'volunteer'. Somewhere in the region of 70 percent of them were 18-year old conscripts from the RAD — the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (National Labour Service). This had been formed by the NSDAP as the official national labour union since those in existence during World War I had been a hotbed of communism and other left-wing political activism. They had wrought havoc in many places such as the dockyards of Hamburg and Kiel, and as they were considered to pose a threat to the country, they were declared illegal.

Above: The Hohenstaufen family crest.

The young men drafted into the RAD had to do manual labour for at least three months; during this time they often had to live in rudimentary conditions with harsh discipline. For some this meant acting as virtual slave labour on farms, whereas others worked in urban areas doing things like digging air raid shelters or helping with municipal projects. Although the RAD was ostensibly a labour union, it was effectively a conduit straight into the armed forces. In many ways it provided a valuable pre-military training for young civilians — this undoubtedly helped speed up their conversion into trained soldiers.

The first 9th Division cadres were formed at the LSSAH (*Leibstandarte-SS* Adolf Hitler) Replacement Battalion in Berlin-Lichterfelde in January 1943; these consisted of a basic staff and training units. In order to help turn the division into a fighting force, experienced men were brought in from the *Leibstandarte*; they formed the division's core, and trained the newly inducted recruits. The division's numbers were also swelled by ethnic Germans, many of whom came from Hungary.

In early February 1943, enough troops had been assembled for the division to move to a training area or *Truppenübungsplatz*, at Mailly-le-Camp. This was to the east of Paris, between Chalons-sur-Marne and Troyes. The division moved out on 8 February, and a few days later SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Wilhelm ('Willi') Bittrich took command over the division under Armeegruppe D, OKW. He ensured that the raw recruits underwent all manner of combat training, including against airborne assaults, a feature that helped them immensely at Arnhem.

The 9th SS Panzergrenadier Division was officially given the name *Hohenstaufen* on 19 March 1943, and at the same time the men were given their cuff-bands (see page 75), of which they became very proud. After undergoing further training, *Hohenstaufen* was put under the command of the Fifteenth Armee and moved north to the Ypres area. The next month the division was moved again, this time to Amiens to take over an army camp vacated by a departing armoured division; it continued training there until the end of the year.

On 23 October 1943, the 9th SS-Panzergrenadier Division *Hohenstaufen* was renamed the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen*, and put under IV SS Panzerkorps*; the new assignment was formalised three days later on 26 October. At the same time the division's two infantry regiments were redesignated from the 1st and 2nd to the 19th

* It can be difficult to differentiate between Allied and Axis unit designations in a book of this nature because words such as division or regiment are spelled the same way in German and English. To aid clarity, throughout this book we have used the German spellings for corps (Korps) and army (Armee).

and 20th. The division also took delivery of a consignment of new PzKpfw V Panther tanks, and its order of battle was reorganised. The changes included the addition of a battery of artillery (although this did not arrive for some time).

On 12 November the division's 15th Motorcycle Company and 2nd Infantry Regiment were detached and assigned to the Reconnaissance Unit (*Aufklärungs-Abteilung*) of the new 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division *Reichsführer-SS*. At the same time the anti-aircraft company (*Flak-Kompanie*) and a survey troop (*Messbatterie*) were also moved elsewhere. The division spent December 1943 as a reserve force under Fifteenth Armee, Armeegruppe D, and then was put under I SS-Panzerkorps in January 1944.

In mid-February *Hohenstaufen* was moved south to the Nimes/Avignon area, not far north of the Mediterranean coast. It took over from the Panzer Lehr Division (Tank Demonstration Division), and underwent the last few weeks of its training before becoming a front-line combat unit. When this ended, together with sister division *Frundsberg*, *Hohenstaufen* was put under II SS-Panzerkorps, headed by Paul Hausser, as part of the OKW reserve.

The II SS-Panzerkorps had been formed in June 1942 before it was transferred to France to take over the Waffen-SS divisions being refitted there. In January 1943 it was moved to the southern part of the Eastern Front, where it fought at Kharkov and Belgorod and then became part of the summer offensive. When it looked as though Mussolini was going to be deposed, the Panzerkorps was transferred to Italy. It was moved to France in December 1943, and then back to the Eastern Front in April 1944. Shortly after this it was sent back to France to help fight the Allies after the invasion of Normandy. After this it took part in the Ardennes Offensive, and then returned to the Eastern Front once again. The unit ended its war in Austria.

Below: Waffen-SS troops in house-to-house fighting on the Eastern Front. By the end of the war there would be 38 Waffen-SS divisions (although some were divisions only in name and never had the requisite strength or weapons), a number of them — such as *Wiking* and *Nordland* — using foreign volunteers. In 1940 there were only 100,000 men in the Waffen-SS: at its peak it would number over 900,000 and in 1943–44 its armoured units would control a quarter of the tanks available to the German ground forces.

READY FOR WAR

RECRUITMENT

When the SS first began recruiting for new blood, due to the patriotic fervour whipped up by Hitler they had the pick of an extremely large crop of enthusiastic nationals. As a result of this abundance of men, their standards were extremely high. The basic requirements were that anyone seeking to join would have to be between 17 and 22 years old and be at least 168cm (5ft 9in) tall (this was set as it was Himmler's height). They also had to have no criminal record and be able to demonstrate a pure Aryan descent as far back as 1800 for enlisted men and 1750 for officers. They had to sign up for different terms of service depending on their rank — this was a minimum of four years for enlisted men, 12 years for NCOs and 25 years for officers. During the 1930s the pass rate was only 15 percent — to some extent because Himmler personally vetted photographs of all the officer candidates to ensure that they all looked sufficiently racially pure.

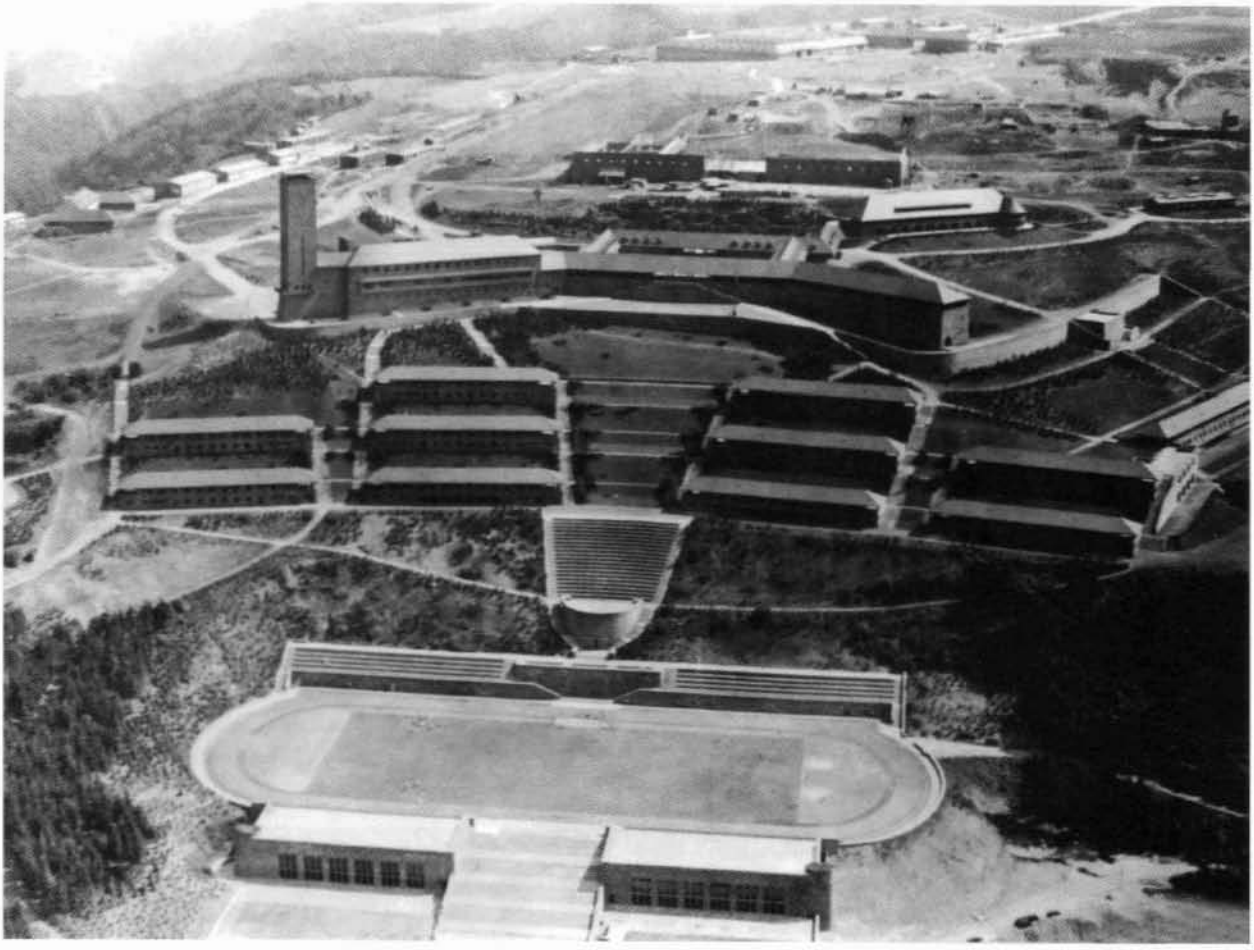
By 1943, it was clear that large numbers of recruits were needed to keep the Waffen-SS fully manned. As a result there was a massive recruiting drive among various nationalities and ethnic groups that would not have been considered to meet the SS racial purity standard. In order to encourage them to sign up, the standards were also lowered. The new intake of recruits only had to sign up for two years or the duration of war; they did not have to join the SS, and only had to be able to pass the lowest of military standards. Foreign recruits were given variations of the usual SS insignia which they wore on their uniforms to indicate that they were of non-German origin.

During World War II around 922,000 soldiers served in the Waffen-SS; of these about 400,000 were Reich Germans, 137,000 were pure West Europeans, 200,000 were pure East Europeans and 185,000 were Volksdeutsche.

As time went on the recruitment standards slipped even further, and by mid-1944 more or less the only criterion was whether the candidate was able to fire a rifle. At this stage many of the recruits being accepted came from other units and services, including the Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, the Labour Service (RAD) and the Hitler Youth.

TRAINING

All SS recruits received three weeks' basic training, although in 1942 all parade ground training was stopped as it was not considered relevant for the battlefield. Further training then began — this was always extremely tough, and usually involved a strong element of inter-disciplinary education. The three main elements that the SS sought to develop were physical fitness, character training and weapons skills. Within this they fostered aggressiveness, initiative and self-reliance. To instil these factors new recruits had a rigid discipline imposed on them, and blind obedience was rewarded. Displaying total trust



Above and Right: The four *Ordensburgen* (Order Castles) of Krössinsee, Vogelsang, Sonthofen and Marienburg were intended to provide training for the elite of the Nazi Party. It was planned that students would spend a year in each of the castles and, after their training, take up positions in the higher echelons of the party. Vogelsang, in the Eifel Mountains near Belgium, was designed by Professor Clemens Klotz and building started in March 1934. There was a foundation ceremony in front of Robert Ley in September of that year. With accommodation for 1,000 'Junkers' — squires is the closest English equivalent — the school concentrated on sports and basic military training: all to no avail. War interrupted the Ordensburg concept and most of those involved entered military service. The Vogelsang complex was bombarded briefly (some of the damage can be seen in the photo at right) and then captured in early February 1945 by units of US 9th Infantry Division. Postwar it was used by NATO.

and loyalty was an integral part of being in the Waffen-SS, and this was nurtured from the first day. Trainees were encouraged to participate in physical activities, especially sports. In an effort to produce elite soldiers, much of the training focussed on battlefield skills such as marksmanship, camouflage techniques and navigation abilities.

The Waffen-SS training units were always looking for ways to improve their teaching methods. A good example of this was that the Panzer crews of the 12th SS-Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend* had to spend a week working in the MAN tank factories in Nuremberg. The idea was to give them a better understanding of how the tanks worked so that they would look after them more carefully and know more about how to repair them when necessary. The training officers were also very keen to get direct feedback from the front line to ensure that new troops would gain from the latest knowledge gleaned from fighting in new environments, climates or against new kinds of weapons or tactics.

Officer cadets were sent to an *SS-Junkerschule* — the main ones being at Bad Tölz and Braunschweig. These were overseen by the then-Oberführer Paul Hausser and by 1937 were producing more than 400 exceptionally well-trained officers a year. Although many foreign nationals were accepted into the SS in the later stages of the war, the officers remained predominantly German. Recruits to the other ranks were sent to various training camps, some of which were alongside regular army troops.

Political and ideological indoctrination was initially an important part of the SS training regime; however, it was never as successful as the senior levels of the hierarchy

Above: The SS had its own officer training schools (*Junkerschulen*) which were built at Braunschweig and Bad Tölz. Sports training was extremely important — fitness was seen as a significant factor in Waffen-SS training to improve stamina and endurance. This 1942 photograph shows young men at Bad Tölz. Note the SS sports vest with the centrally placed SS sports symbol.

would have liked. Many recruits maintained their own religious beliefs in private, but gave a public face of acceptance. As the war got underway, it soon became clear that military skills were more important than political ones, and with the exception of some of the more sinister elements of the SS, most of the ideological courses were abandoned. Life expectancy on the battlefront was, after all, only two months.

Above: Waffen-SS Panzer IV Ausf Es on exercise. Produced from September 1940 to April 1941, Ausf E versions were involved in 'Barabarossa' but most had been lost by 1944.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE GERMAN ARMY

The German Army was organised into a series of units that fitted together to form a coherent structure. At the highest level was the *Heeresgruppe*, or senior army group; this was made up of several *Armeegruppe(n)*, or army groups, and was the largest German military formation of World War II. The Heeresgruppe would usually be based on a particular geographical region, and could contain several hundred thousand men spread across hundreds of units.

The Armeegruppe was typically made up of two or three *Armee(n)*, or armies, and came under the command of the Heeresgruppe, but whereas it had a clearly defined status at the beginning of the war, as time went on its format became less rigid. The armies that made up an Armeegruppe were sometimes all-German, but were more usually made up of one German army alongside one or more allied armies. When this was the case the German Army generally had seniority over its foreign neighbours. As the war progressed and the tide turned in favour of the Allies, the Axis forces could not maintain their original numbers due to the massive losses they were experiencing. This meant that a unit designated as an Armee, which would normally be made up of several *Korps*, or corps, could in reality be as small as an individual corps. An Armee operated at the strategic level, and so would usually also have several other units attached to it: these could include reserves, training units or specialist formations. In all an Armee would be made up of anywhere between 60,000 and 100,000 troops.

A Korps was much like an army, in that it was made up of a number of *Division(en)*, or divisions, and usually also encompassed several independent units, such as reserves, training units or specialist formations. It operated below the strategic level but above the tactical level, organising the major operations of its divisions and independent units. A Korps could be made up of 40–60,000 troops.

A Division functioned at the operational level, and was usually made up of one to four *Regiment(en)*, or regiments, depending on its particular role. Sometimes a division was made up of one or two *Brigade(n)*, or brigades. In the early part of the war a typical division was made up of between 10,000 and 20,000 men. A brigade was smaller than a division, being composed of between 5,000 and 7,000 troops, distributed across several regiments. It could function, however, either independently of, or as part of a

division or a Korps. A regiment operated at the tactical level, and was usually composed of between 2,000 and 6,000 troops in several *Abteilung(en)* or *Bataillon(e)* — battalions. It could also have attached to it other units, such as reserves, training units or specialist formations.

The Abteilung was a self-sufficient combat unit which operated at the tactical level. It was made up of several *Kompanie(n)*, or companies, along with any attached units, and was capable of functioning in combat without the need for assistance from other support units. To do this it had its own artillery, engineers, anti-tank crews, machine gun groups and so on. It would usually be composed of between 500 and 1,000 men.

A Kompanie operated at the tactical level, and was made up of several *Züge* (single *Zug*) or platoons. A typical Kompanie would number between 100 and 200 men, and a Zug would be made up of 30 to 40 troops. Each Zug was composed of several *Gruppe(n)*, or groups, and below this were the *Halbzug* and the *Trupp*. A Halbzug, or half platoon, was simply the name given to a unit formed when a platoon was split in two, and the Trupp, or troop, was generally made up of between 10 and 20 men.

The *Kampfgruppe(n)*, or battlegroup was an important part of the German army's modus operandi. It was a combat formation that was similar in concept to the American Task Force. It could range in size anywhere from a Kompanie (100 to 200 men) right up to a Korps (40,000–60,000 men). Most were the size of an Abteilung, and therefore composed of between 500 and 1,000 men. Kampfgruppen were often assembled to take on a specific task — such as when the *Hohenstaufen* was attacked by the Allied airborne offensive at Arnhem. There was no fixed format: they could contain artillery units, tanks, amphibious assault craft, anti-tank guns and, of course, infantry. Those at Arnhem were hastily gathered together in order to hold back the advancing British and Polish paratroopers, and were made up of whatever men and resources could be found. As with most Kampfgruppen, they were named after their leaders, and so in this instance there were Kampfgruppen called 'Harzer', 'Spindler', 'von Tettau', 'Hanke', 'Euling' and 'Frundsberg'.

Another unit used by the German army was the *Kolonne*, or column. This was an independent transportation formation of variable size used for moving equipment and supplies.

9th SS PANZER DIVISION *HOHENSTAUFEN* MAIN UNITS

19th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
20th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
9th SS Panzer Regiment
9th SS Artillery Regiment
9th SS Aufklärungs (reconnaissance) Abteilung
9th SS Panzerjäger (anti-tank) Abteilung
9th SS Flak (anti-aircraft) Abteilung
9th SS Pionier (engineer) Abteilung
9th SS Panzer-Nachrichten (signals) Abteilung
Divisional support units

Below: Route march by men of the SS officer training school at Bad Tölz, 1942. The school was built before the war under the eagle eye of the chief of the Waffen-SS Inspectorate, Paul Hausser. Military training ensured that the early Waffen-SS units were true elite formations. As an example, Sylvester Stadler — the final commander of *Hohenstaufen* — attended Bad Tölz where he graduated with the rank of SS-Untersturmführer.

IN ACTION

Above: Waffen-SS troops pass a knocked-out Russian JS-2 heavy tank on the Eastern Front in spring 1944. The most powerfully armed tank in the world at the time with a 122mm main gun, the JS-2 entered production in late 1943.

In December 1943, before they had even completed their training, the *Hohenstaufen* Division was assigned to I SS Panzerkorps *Leibstandarte* along with the remains of the 1st SS Panzer Division and the newly-formed 12th SS Panzergrenadier Division *Hitlerjugend*.

In early 1944 the German forces all over Europe were in a dire situation. In January, the Soviets had relieved Leningrad from German forces after a 900-day siege. On top of this the Allies were working their way up the Italian peninsula and had just landed an invasion force at Anzio. On 4 March the Soviets, under Marshal Georgi Zhukov, had launched a massive offensive on the Ukrainian front driving towards the Carpathians. This drove a large wedge into the left flank of German Armeegruppe South.

Having to fight on so many fronts at once put an enormous pressure on the army's resources, and in March 1944, as the Soviets arrived at the Polish border, the OKW moved *Hohenstaufen* into action. It was accompanied by its sister Waffen-SS division — the 10th SS-Panzer Division *Frundsberg*. Together they were incorporated into II SS Panzerkorps under the command of Paul Hausser. In this they were joined by the army's 349th Infantry and Panzer Lehr divisions.

THE EASTERN FRONT

In early March 1944, troops of the Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front mounted a major offensive aimed at positions along the Eastern Front near Skala in the Tarnopol-Proskurov sector. Their great numerical superiority meant that they were able to overpower German forces wherever they struck. Several counterattacks by the First Panzerarmee under General Hube kept them back for a while, but on 22 March five armoured corps broke through the lines followed by large numbers of infantry. They made their way south between the Zbruch and Seret rivers, and then crossed the River Dniestr. Meanwhile, other Soviet forces pushed towards them from the east in the area of Yampol and Mogilev-Podolskiy. This left the First Panzerarmee in danger of being encircled, but Hitler forbade any withdrawals or tactical repositioning. The fact that they would be completely cut off from supplies or reinforcements was, therefore, a foregone conclusion, and when the two Russian armies linked up on 25 March, no one caught in the pocket was surprised.

Although the trapped German forces had enough ammunition to survive for two weeks or more, they had very little fuel, and before long only combat vehicles were still moving. In early April 1944, II SS Panzerkorps was transported by train to the Eastern

Left: MG34 magazine change while the man at left fires a Soviet PPSh-41 SMG. The Waffen-SS used many captured Russian weapons — and there were a lot of them: by 1945 about five million PPSh-41s had been made. The circular drum magazine carried 71 rounds.

Below Left: Waffen-SS MG42 team in Russia.

Below: *Flammenwerfer* (flamethrower) 41 team prepare for action.

Above: Photograph shows the ceremony at which SS-Obersturmbannführer Otto Meyer, commanding SS Panzer Regiment 9 of *Hohenstaufen*, received his Knight's Cross on 4 June 1944. He was killed in France in September.

Front to help rescue the First Panzerarmee from its encirclement. The Soviets had issued an ultimatum that unless the German forces there surrendered immediately, they would all be shot. In order to help effect a rescue of the beleaguered troops, *Hohenstaufen* (under the XXXXVIII Armeekorps), as part of the Fourth Panzerarmee, took part in a powerful eastward counter-attack against the First Soviet Tank Army. This was launched on 5 April, with other units of the II SS Panzerkorps attacking on the flank.

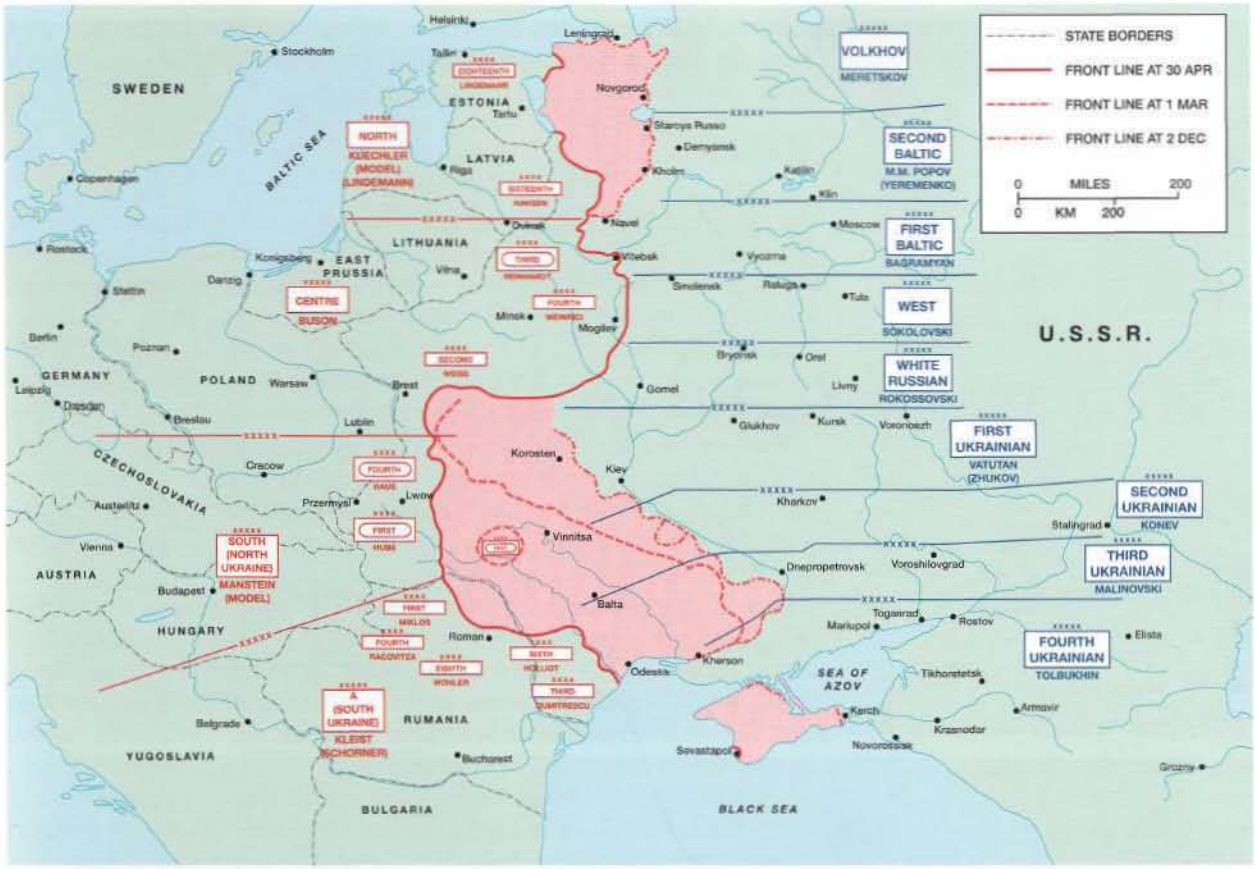
The timing of this offensive was not to the Germans' advantage, however, as the arrival of spring had turned the previously frozen ground into a giant mud bath. The tanks soon bogged down and the division took massive losses. Nevertheless, the *Hohenstaufen*, fighting alongside the *Frundsberg*, kept up the pressure on the fiercely defended Soviet front.

Anecdotal evidence from a *Hohenstaufen* veteran from the 12th Company, 19th Panzergrenadier Regiment tells that during this action the Soviets attacked at Kamenets-Podolskiy in waves ten deep, where only the soldiers in the first five lines had weapons. At this stage in the war this was a common practice; after all, Stalin had more men than weapons. In order to keep their men moving forwards, the Soviets had heavily armed NKVD troops behind them — their orders were to shoot any soldiers who weren't moving quickly enough. As troops at the front fell, those behind picked up their weapons and carried on.

Below: Waffen-SS soldiers on the Eastern Front. Note that the man at back has a bayonet fixed to his rifle. The man in front is carrying wire cutters.

On 9 April, *Hohenstaufen* finally broke through Soviet lines and made contact with the 6th Panzer Division of the First Panzerarmee in Buczacz, and in doing so freed it from Russian encirclement. The next day the German front line was fully re-established.

Through the rest of April and May, *Hohenstaufen* acted as a reserve for the *Heeresgruppe Nordukraine* (Army Group North Ukraine), but while the division was refitting in preparation for a new offensive near Kovel, the Allies landed at Normandy on 6 June 1944. At first Hitler thought that Operation 'Overlord' was a feint aimed at diverting attention from the real invasion. It soon became clear, however, that this was not the case, and that massive amounts of troops and equipment had been landed successfully. This placed the Axis forces between two enormously powerful enemies. Hitler therefore cancelled plans for the II SS Panzerkorps to attack in the East,



Above: The Eastern Front in 1944.

Right: Waffen-SS 50mm Pak 38 anti-tank gun on the Eastern Front. Note butt and drum magazine of a Soviet PPSh-41 SMG at bottom of picture.

Above right: Waffen-SS MG42 team in the garden of a chateau near Caen.

Below right: British M4 Shermans move forward near Caen during July 1944.

and instead on 11 June ordered them to move to France under Panzergruppe West, Army Group B. The next day the first units left Poland to travel west — for most of the journey they were under continuous attack from Allied fighter-bombers.

FRANCE

Hohenstaufen reached the French border on or around 16 June, but it took several more days to reach its destination in north-western France, and another week for the rest of II Panzerkorps to arrive. The first units were unloaded from their railway carriages between Paris and Nancy on 20 June; they then moved to the south of Aunay-sur-Odan in a series of cross-country marches. At this time the division was composed of 18,000 men and 170 tanks, 21 self-propelled (SP) guns, 287 armoured halftrack personnel carriers, 16 armoured cars, 18 armoured artillery pieces and 3,670 other vehicles.

It was not the first SS Panzer division in the region, however — *Leibstandarte* and *Das Reich* were already in northern France for rest and refitting when the invasion took place. Other German forces in the area included the *Hitlerjugend* Division and the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division *Götz von Berlichingen* under the command of Werner Ostendorff.

Hohenstaufen's mission was to help spearhead an offensive towards the beachhead. It was intended to drive a wedge between the Allied armies so that they could be encircled and defeated. The delays in reaching France caused by Allied air attacks meant, however, that by the time *Hohenstaufen* arrived, it was too late for this to work. The sheer weight of American, British, Canadian and other Allied units was more than the depleted German forces could withstand.

Below: Waffen-SS advance to the front during the battle for Normandy. Their SdKfz 10 halftrack is heavily camouflaged against air attack.

Before the German assault on the beachhead could be launched, however, the British pushed forward in an attempt to take Caen. This was code-named Operation

64
64
66
66
65
65
62
62

Above right: British armour did not fare well against the elite Waffen-SS Panzers. Here, brewed up Cromwells, Villers Bocage.

Below right: Well-known photograph of a youthful Waffen-SS MG42 gunner in France in 1944. Note the 75-round drum magazine. By the time that *Hohenstaufen* arrived in Normandy, there was a significant Waffen-SS contingent in the area. In the fighting over the next month, these forces would prove to be expert, tenacious fighters, with excellent weapons. However, Allied air superiority and its attrition of German tanks and other vehicles, gave the Allies a significant advantage.

'Charnwood'. They were met by *Hohenstaufen* at the Odon River on 28 June; this was the unit's first action on the Western Front. The next day the division fought again with British troops to the south-west of Caen as part of a counter-attack on either side of the Villers-Bocage–Noyers road. This was an attempt to assist other German troops, but it proved to be a fierce battle, and all the SS units in the area suffered severe losses; Caen itself soon fell to the Allies.

On 30 June the SS took further heavy losses when *Das Reich* and *Hohenstaufen* were attacked by the RAF who carried out a saturation raid using 250 Lancaster bombers at Villers-Bocage near Caen. The divisons were then pulled back under the cover of darkness and reassembled as a tactical reserve for II Panzerkorps in the area of Maizet-Vacognes-Montigny, with the Divisional Command Post at Le Mesnil.

On 3 July 1944, SS-Oberführer Sylvester Stadler took over command of *Hohenstaufen*. At this time its order of battle was that of a normal Panzer division, except that it did not have an anti-tank battalion (*Panzerjäger Abteilung*), as this was still being fitted out in Germany. The division was well below strength in terms of manpower and equipment, however. Most of the division was down to around 80 percent of its intended troop numbers. The Panzergrenadier regiments were even worse off: down to only 60 percent of their total expected strength — officers had been worst hit. The artillery stood at around 90 percent, the tanks at about 70 percent and other vehicles at around 80 percent. Although it was well below strength, the division was not reinforced as all available resources were channelled to other areas.

Once the Allies had established themselves near Caen west of the Orne River, they launched Operation 'Jupiter' on 10 July. This was staged by troops made up of the 43rd (Wessex) Infantry Division, along with the 46th (Highland) Brigade and a brigade of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. Armoured support came from the 31st Tank Brigade (7 RTR and 9 RTR) and the 4th Armoured Brigade. They had artillery support from the divisional artillery of the 43rd Wessex, the 15th Scottish, the 53rd Welsh and the 11th Armoured. They also had the heavier guns of the Second Army Group's Royal Artillery.

Operation 'Jupiter' had three objectives. The first was to stop German armoured units from withdrawing; the second was to take the high ground between the rivers Odon and Orne. The most notable feature of this area was known as 'Hill 112'. The third task was to try and secure the bridges which spanned the Orne and establish bridgeheads on the other side.

Since the Germans held Hill 112 which commanded the ground beyond the bridge over the Odon River, it was of vital importance to the Allies, and a major battle ensued for its possession. After a heavy artillery bombardment, the British VIII Corps was sent into action at dawn. They soon came up against the *Hitlerjugend*, *Frundsberg* and *Hohenstaufen* divisions, who were backed by the recent arrival of the *502. SS-schwere Panzer Abteilung* (2nd SS Heavy Tank Battalion). This was the Tiger battalion of II SS Panzerkorps, which had been on the road from Holland continuously for 18 days. It arrived at St Martin, about two miles south of Maltot, at 02:45 on 10 July. Their defence of the high ground was stubborn, and massive losses soon accrued on both sides. In total 15 Allied infantry battalions and six tank battalions were opposed by six German infantry battalions and five depleted Panzer battalions. Thousands of troops were killed, with the British 43rd Division losing more than 2,000 men in the first two days of fighting alone. One of the German Panzergrenadier regiments (Panzergrenadier Regiment 2) walked off the hill with only one officer and 45 men left.

On 30 July, an offensive by the British VIII Corps, code-named Operation 'Bluecoat', began at Beny-Bocage. It was intended to support the Americans by taking pressure off their left flank. By this stage of the war, Montgomery had realised that directly attacking the elite SS armoured units was futile, so in this operation he ordered his troops into

T187796
76
RD
T187796

Above and Left: Two photographs showing similar scenes of fighting in Normandy, August 1944: both with knocked out Panthers. The attrition rate for German armour during the battles around Falaise was fearsome. *Hohenstaufen* would escape the pocket with fewer than 500 men and 25 tanks.

Above right: Waffen-SS man armed with a Panzerfaust inspects a knocked-out Sherman near Caen 1944.

Right: Heavily camouflaged Jagdpanzer IV in Normandy 1944. Developed as an improved version of the StuG III, over 750 were produced in 1944. Note the missing *Schürzen* — the spaced armour skirts designed to protect against shaped-charge weapons such as PIATs or bazookas.

Left: Waffen-SS soldier awaits enemy armour with his Panzerfaust. Produced initially with a range of 30m (100ft), during summer 1944 the Panzerfaust 60 doubled the range — by the end of the war it had been improved to the 150m (500ft) version.

Below: Normandy battle casualty. The tube slung around his neck carries a spare barrel for an MG34 or MG42 machine gun.

HOHENSTAUFEN OFFICIAL ORDER OF BATTLE SUMMER 1944

Division HQ
Staff
Band
9th SS (mot) Mapping Detachment
9th SS (mot) Military Police Detachment
9th SS (mot) Escort Company
1 x SP Flak Battery
1 x Motorcycle Platoon

9th SS Panzer Regiment
HQ & HQ Coy
1 x Panzer Signals Platoon
1 x Panzer Platoon
1 x Panzer Flak Battery
1 x Panzer Maintenance Company
1st Panzer Battalion
HQ and HQ Company
4 x Pz Coys (each 22 x PzKpfw V Panther)
1 x (mot) Supply Company
2nd Panzer Battalion
HQ and HQ Company
4 x Pz Coys (each 22 x PzKpfw IV)
1 x (mot) Supply Company

19th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
HQ & HQ Company
1 x Staff Platoon
1 x Signals Platoon
1 x Motorcycle Platoon
3 x Battalions
HQ and HQ Company
1 x (mot) Supply Company
3 x (mot) Panzergrenadier Companies
1 x (mot) Heavy Panzergrenadier Company
1 x Mortar Platoon
1 x Panzerjäger Platoon
1 x SP Heavy Infantry Gun Company
1 x SP Flak Company
1 x (mot) Engineer Company

20th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
HQ & HQ Company
1 x Staff Platoon
1 x Signals Platoon
1 x Motorcycle Platoon
1st (mot) Battalion
HQ and HQ Company
1 x (mot) Supply Company
3 x (mot) Panzergrenadier Companies
1 x (mot) Heavy Panzergrenadier Company
1 x Mortar Platoon
1 x Panzerjäger Platoon
2nd (mot) Battalion
HQ and HQ Company
1 x (mot) Supply Company
3 x (mot) Panzergrenadier Companies
1 x (mot) Heavy Panzergrenadier Company
1 x Mortar Platoon
1 x Panzerjäger Platoon
3rd (mot) Battalion
HQ and HQ Company
1 x (mot) Supply Company
3 x (halftrack) Panzergrenadier Coys
1 x (halftrack Heavy Panzergrenadier Coys
1 x Mortar Platoon
1 x Panzerjäger Platoon
1 x SP Heavy Infantry Gun Company
1 x SP Flak Company
1 x (mot) Engineer Company
HQ & HQ Pl
2 x (halftrack) Engineer Platoon
2 x (mot) Engineer Platoon

9th SS Panzerjäger Battalion
HQ & HQ Pl
2 x Jagdpanzer IV Companies
1 x (mot) Panzerjäger Conpany
1 x (mot) Supply Company

9th SS Panzer Aufklärungs Abteilung
HQ & HQ Coy
1 x Armoured Car Platoon
1 x (mot) Signals Platoon
1 x Armoured Car Company
3 (halftrack) Reconnaissance Companies
1 x Supply Company

9th SS Flak Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Bty
3 x (mot) Heavy Batteries
1 x (mot) Medium Battery
1 x (mot) Searchlight Battery

9th SS Artillery Regiment
HQ & HQ Bty
1 x SP Flak Battery
1st SP Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Bty
1 x SP Battery (6 x Hummel)
2 x SP Batteries (6 x Wespe)
2nd Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Bty
2 x (mot) Batteries
3rd Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Bty
2 x (mot) Batteries
4th Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Bty
3 x (mot) Batteries

9th SS Engineer Battalion
Bn HQ & HQ Coy
1 x (halftrack) Recce Platoon
1 x (halftrack) Engineer Company
2 x (mot) Engineer Companies
1 x (mot) Light Panzer Bridging Train

9th SS Signals Battalion
1 x Panzer Telephone Company
1 x Panzer Radio Company
1 x (mot) Supply Column

9th SS Feldersatz Battalion
2-5 Companies

9th SS Supply Troop
HQ
6 x (mot) 120 ton Transportation Coys
1 x (mot) Supply Company
1 x (mot) Ordnance Company
3 x (mot) Maintenance Companies
1 x (mot) Maintenance Supply Column

Other
1 x (mot) Bakery Company
1 x (mot) Butcher Company
1 x (mot) Divisional Administration Platoon
2 x (mot) Medical Companies
1 x (mot) Decontamination Company
3 x Ambulances Companies
1 x Field Post Office

action against the exhausted 326th Infantry Division, which was one of the weakest units on the German front line.

The German High Command had not been expecting the British to push forward so aggressively, and they had little to hold back the advancing troops other than the natural terrain. The VIII Corps took five miles of German territory on the first day, but a counter-attack by three German Jagdpanther assault guns on the tanks of the Scots Guards destroyed 13 of their 40 Churchill tanks. Nevertheless, the Allies continued to make good ground, until they had penetrated a few miles further, when their commanders started to worry about the number of German troops behind them; as a result the advance began to run out of steam. This was not helped by the fact that some British units — particularly the Guards Armoured Division — seemed incapable of working closely with the infantry. This resulted in poor battlefield performances, and they failed to take the town of Vire before German reinforcements arrived. Had they done so, it would have been a major victory for the Allies.

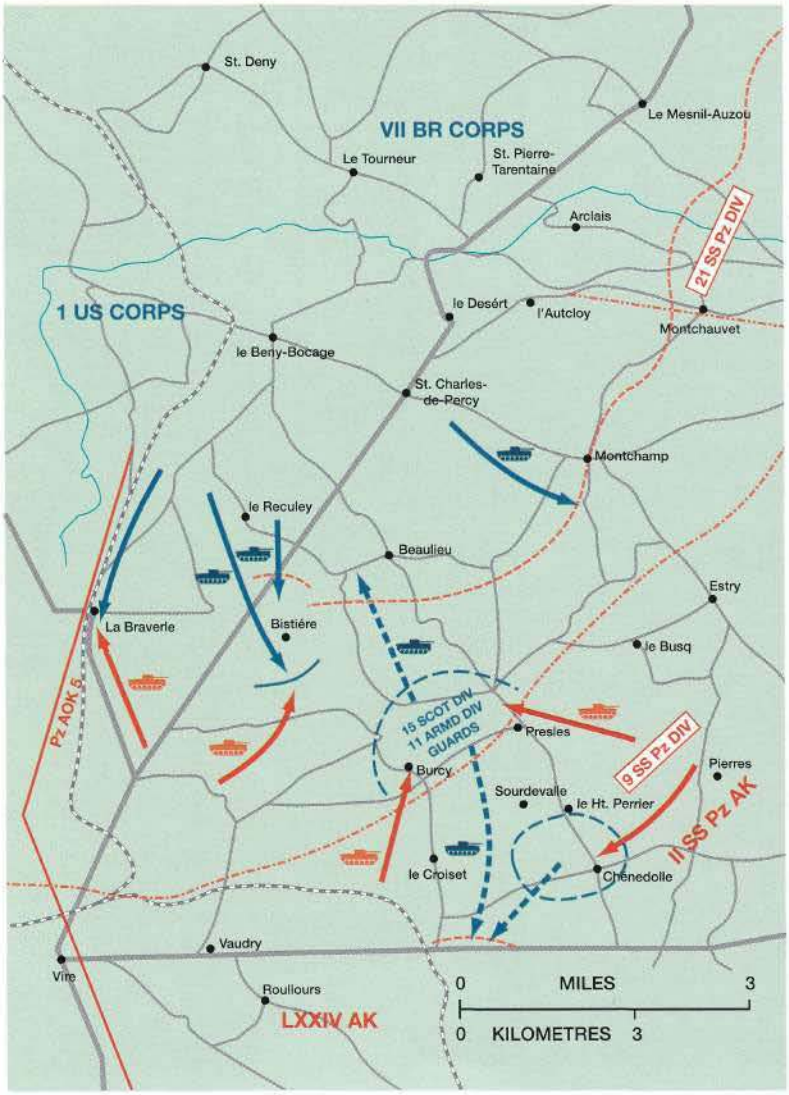
On 1 August, *Hohenstaufen* was sent to deal with the threatened Allied breakthrough, and the division's counter-attack trapped the British 8th Rifle Brigade (3rd Infantry Division) and the 23rd Hussars (11th Armoured Division) two miles beyond Presles, south of Beny-Bocage. The Allies quickly staged a relief assault composed of the 9th and 185th Brigades (from the 3rd Infantry Division) and a combat group from the 11th Armoured Division.

Hohenstaufen was organised into several Kampfgruppen for the action, including KG 'Meyer', 'Telkamp' and 'Weiss'. An attack by KG 'Meyer' on Presles on 4 August managed to sever the British advance, but it had to relinquish the village later in the day. After three more days of heavy fighting, the Allied assault was called off.

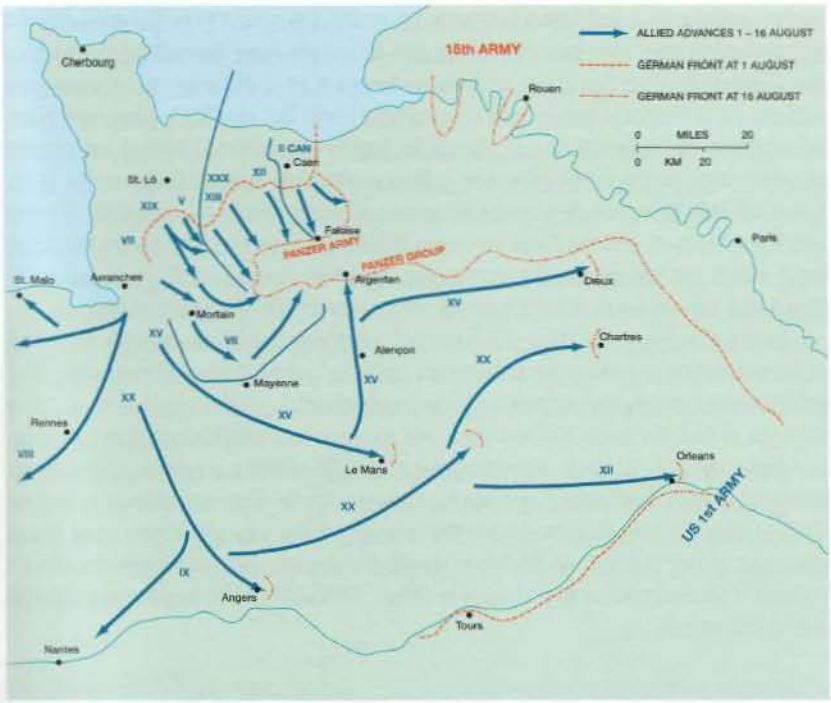
After this *Hohenstaufen* was redeployed to the Putanges area — the move started on Sunday, 13 August, and was completed by Wednesday, 16 August. The rapidly changing battlefield situation, however, meant that the division was in a vulnerable position, and was moved almost immediately to Vimoutiers.

On the night of Thursday, 17 August, the US Third Army, along with British, Canadian and Polish forces, succeeded in surrounding the remains of 15 German divisions in an area 20 miles long by 10 miles wide. This encircled zone became known as the Falaise Pocket. Among the forces trapped there was II SS Panzerkorps, including the SS Panzer divisions *Hohenstaufen* and *Das Reich*. In all the besieged troops numbered around 100,000 men.

The Allies then proceeded to bring all their artillery and fighter-bombers to bear on the



Below: Operation 'Spring' was one of the bloodiest operations that Canadian forces took part in during the war. They suffered 18,444 casualties, including 5,021 killed. Launched on 24 July after a preliminary artillery bombardment, the Cameron Highlanders and Black Watch of Canada attacked entrenched German defenders. On 28 July *Hohenstaufen* counter-attacked and stopped the offensive in its tracks. But the British and Canadian battles around Caen did their job: they pulled in the German armour and allowed the American forces to break out to the west.

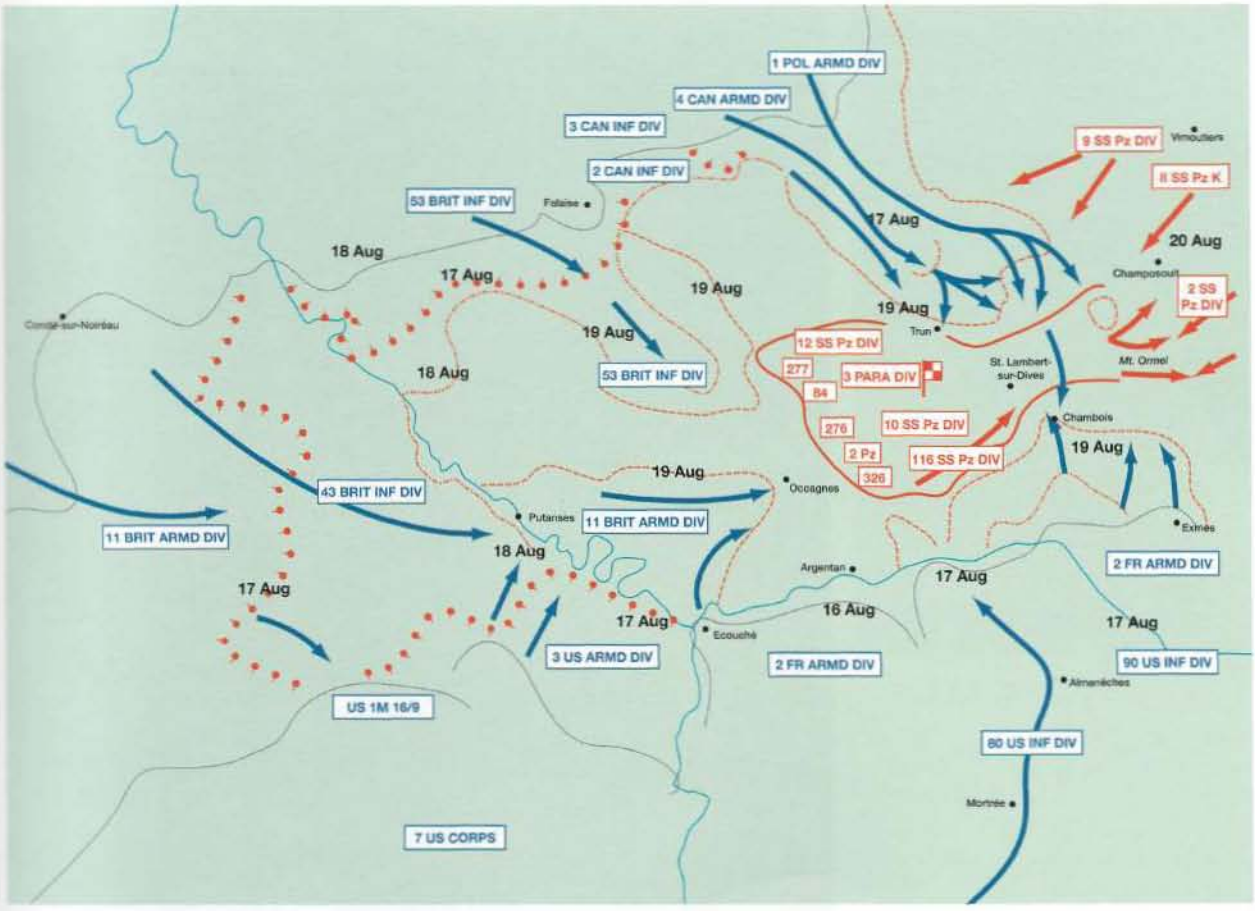


KAMPFGRUPPE 'MEYER' ORDER OF BATTLE

Attack on Presles on 4 August commanded by SS-Obersturmbannführer Otto Meyer (Oak Leaves to Knight's Cross awarded posthumously)

SS Panzer Regiment 2
Elements of SS Panzer Regiment 'H'
SS Panzer Aufklärung Abteilung 9

Left and Below: The Battle of the Falaise Gap saw the destruction of the German Seventh Armee and Fifth Panzerarmee with over 50,000 taken prisoner and wounded, and over 10,000 dead These two maps show the advance of the Allies to create the pocket and the frantic attempts by the German forces — including *Hohenstaufen* — to keep the gap from closing.



pocket, and massive destruction was wrought on the besieged troops. The only way out was through a small gap between Falaise and Chambois along the narrow roads beside the Dives River. The Canadians and Poles, however, tried to close this off near the settlements of Merri and Trun by attacking from the north. This resulted in some very heavy fighting, and on Friday, 18 August, the pocket had been constricted to measure just five by seven miles. By the evening the road to Trun was blocked at Mont-Ormel on the D-16. Chambois was being watched by the Americans at Bourg and by the French at Omméel and Saint-Lambert, and the Canadians were observing the bridges. There were secondary roads which led toward the slopes of Auge, Neauphe, Coudehard, Boisjos and Mont-Ormel, but this area was under the surveillance of the 1st Polish Armoured Division.

By the morning of Saturday, 19 August, the gap was almost closed, with the bridge at Saint-Lambert providing the main escape route for German troops. Almost all of their vehicles, guns and heavy weapons had to be abandoned — this was due to a severe shortage of fuel, the badly blocked roads and the incessant attacks from Allied aircraft.

Hohenstaufen, fighting alongside the 12th SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend*, managed to hold the Falaise Gap open for long enough for II SS Panzerkorps to escape. On 21 August 1944, they made one last assault on the gap and a few more troops managed to get through. At 16:30, however, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich ordered II SS Panzerkorps to pull back to Orbec, although it took very heavy casualties during the retreat.

Below: Allied air superiority saw fighter-bombers wreak havoc on German vehicles fleeing the Falaise Pocket.

When the Allies finally completed their encirclement at Chambois there were still around 60,000 German troops left in the pocket. At this stage the units still within the pocket included the German Seventh Armee commanded by General Hausser, the Eberbach Armoured Group, the HQ of LXXIV Korps (von Funck), LXXIVth Korps (Elfeld), XXXXVIIth Panzerkorps (Staube) and II Fallschirmkorps (Meindl). There were also remnants of several infantry divisions, including the 84th, 226th, 227th, 326th, 353rd and the 3rd Fallschirmjäger Division as well as elements of the 1st and 10th SS Panzer divisions and the 2nd and 116th Panzer divisions.

Having suffered heavy losses, II SS Panzerkorps was then pulled back across the Seine into Belgium and Holland on 22 August. During the retreat *Hohenstaufen* acted as a rearguard, and as a result had to fight for most of the way, including actions near Amiens, Orbec, Bourg-Achard, Duclair, Laon and Cambrai. Some of the fighting was so intense that it ended up as hand-to-hand combat. All this time they were also being attacked from the air by Allied fighter-bombers.

The division had performed well in northern France, in spite of losing nearly 20 percent of its original strength. SS-Oberführer Sylvester Stadler had been wounded in late July, and his temporary replacement, SS-Oberführer und Oberst der Schutzpolizei Friedrich-Wilhelm Bock was awarded Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross for his leadership during this period.

9th SS Panzer Division's Structure under Walther Harzer 29 August–10 October 1944

9th SS Panzer Regiment
19th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
20th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment
9th SS Aufklärungs Abteilung
9th SS Artillery Regiment
9th SS Panzerjäger Abteilung
9th SS Flak Abteilung
9th SS Panzer Pionier Abteilung
Pionier Lehr Battalion 9
9th SS Panzer Nachrichten (signals) Abteilung
9th SS Sturmgeschütz Abteilung
9th SS Beobachtungs (observation) Battery
9th SS Nachschubtruppen (Supply and Logistics)
9th SS Panzer Instandsetzungs (Maintenance Unit) Abteilung
9th SS Verwaltungstruppen (Administration) Abteilung
9th SS Sanitäts (Medical) Companies
9th SS Feldlazarett (Field Hospital)
9th SS Feldgendarmerie (MP) Trupp
9th SS Ausbildungs (Training) Battalion
9th SS Wirtschafts (Logistics) Battalion
9th SS Krankenkraftwagen (ambulance) Zug
9th SS Feldpostamt (Field Post Office)
9th SS Kriegsberichter (War Correspondents) Zug
9th SS Feldersatz (Field Replacement) Battalion

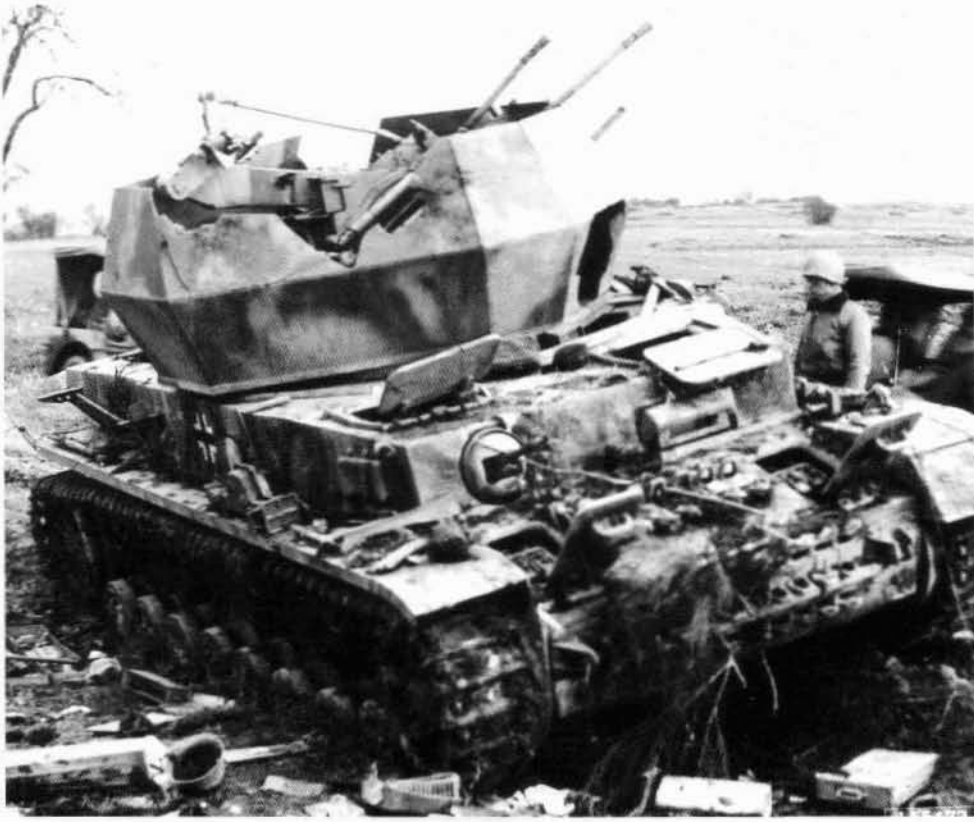
PAULA

Above: Waffen-SS prisoners from the Falaise Pocket.

Right: Knocked-out Flakpanzer IV *Wirbelwind* armed with a 20mm Flakvierling 38.

Above left: *Hohenstaufen* PzKpfw IV Ausf H in France during 1944.

Left: Waffen-SS grenadier.



Above: Sylvester Stadler, CO of *Hohenstaufen*, was wounded in late July and replaced by SS-Oberführer und Oberst der Schutzpolizei Friedrich-Wilhelm Bock. Stadler would reach the rank of SS-Brigadeführer and become the 152nd recipient of the Swords to the Knight's Cross.

ARNHEM

The mauling that the division had received in Northern France and then subsequently in its retreat through Belgium meant that it needed extensive reorganisation and resupply. On 3 September, the depleted *Hohenstaufen* was ordered to move to Arnhem by Generalfeldmarschall Walther Model, commander of the Sixth Panzerarmee, Armeegruppe B, for rest and a refit. They arrived in the Veluwe area, to the north of Arnhem, on 7 September 1944. Three days later, on 10 August, the division was ordered to move once again — this time back to Germany by rail for a major divisional refit. Before doing so, *Hohenstaufen* was to hand over all its weapons, vehicles and equipment, including two batteries of field howitzers, to its sister division, the 10th SS Panzer Division *Frundsberg*, which was to stay behind. At this time, the divisional strength was somewhere around 6–7,000 men. Two months earlier, the figure had been almost 16,000.

The first units were moved out on 12 September — these were mostly technical and stores personnel. On Sunday, 17 September, just before the main body of *Hohenstaufen* was due to set off on the journey back to their homeland, the skies filled with British paratroopers. At this stage there were only around 2,500 men left in the area — these were organised into 19 quick-reaction units called *Kampfgruppen* (battle groups). Named after their commanding officers, they were distributed across 12 different locations. Since the Germans had recently experienced armed uprisings from local resistance groups in other parts of Europe, they were wary of billeting small numbers of troops in towns and cities. As a result of this the Kampfgruppen were stationed in small villages near important strategic points, such as roads and bridges.

The Second Panzerarmee was originally formed with the specific intention of defending against an Allied invasion from the Channel Coast. Consequently, many of its men had been trained to fight against airborne forces. A significant part of this training was that officers were taught to respond to the battlefield situation without waiting for orders from senior commanders. At first the massive Allied paratroop offensive took the Germans completely by surprise. They had been given no warning about it all, but their fast-response training paid off — they wasted little time in reacting and soon had an effective defence in place.

The Allied offensive, which was named Operation 'Market Garden', was intended to be a lightning-fast assault on vital bridges deep in enemy-held territory at the Dutch town of Arnhem. It was to come from two directions — an airborne assault by British paratroops from the 1st Airborne Division, and a ground attack by the British Second Army. The main objective of the high-speed attack was to give the Allies a chance to cross the Rhine before the Germans could mobilise to stop them. This would also cut off their forces in western Holland, and outflank the well-fortified Siegfried Line. If it was successful, it would leave the Allies in an excellent position to drive across the open plains

ORDER OF BATTLE DURING OPERATION 'MARKET GARDEN', SEPTEMBER 1944

German Order of Battle

Armed Forces Command Netherlands

II SS Panzerkorps
SS-Kampfgruppe *Hohenstaufen*
SS-Kampfgruppe *Frundsberg*

Hermann Goering Division Training Regiment
Kampfgruppe 'Von Tettau'

Army Group B

Fifteenth Armee
LXVII Korps
346th Infantry Division
711th Static Division
719th Coastal Division

LXXXVIII Korps
Kampfgruppe 'Chill'
59th Infantry Division
245th Infantry Division
712th Static Division

1st Fallschirm Armee
LXXXVI Korps
176th Infantry Division
Kampfgruppe 'Walther'
6th Parachute Regiment
107th Panzer Brigade
Division 'Erdmann'

II Fallschirmkorps
XII SS Korps
180th Infantry Division
190th Infantry Division

363th Volksgrenadier Division (from 5 October)

Allied Order of Battle

21st Army Group

2nd British Army
XXX Corps
2nd Household Cavalry Regiment
Guards Armoured Division
43rd (Wessex) Division
50th (Northumbrian) Division
8th Armoured Brigade
Royal Netherlands Brigade 'Princess Irene'

First Allied Airborne Army
82nd Airborne Division
101st Airborne Division

I British Airborne Corps
1st Airborne Division
1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade
52nd (Lowland) Division (airportable)

of northern Germany — an area that would be very hard to defend. It was genuinely believed that the plan could shorten the war by a year.

The paratroops were also meant to secure an 80-mile-long corridor from the Allies' front line near Eindhoven, right up to Arnhem, along which there were several bridges. The idea was that they would go in using the element of surprise, and hold the vital crossing points until ground forces could join them. A force of 10,000 paratroops was assembled, and on the morning of 17 September 1944, the operation was launched. For the previous three days, medium and heavy bombers from the US Eighth Air Force had targeted German defences along the intended air corridor. They were backed up by fighters and fighter-bombers which attacked anti-aircraft batteries, vehicles and other ground targets.

On Sunday, 17 September, at 09:45, the vast air armada of over 2,000 transport planes, gliders and tow aircraft began assembling in the skies over England. The paratroopers were packed into C-47s — these assembled into several formations, each consisting of 45 aircraft. Those troops who were not being inserted by parachute were

GERMAN ARMOUR IN THE ARNHEM AREA AT THE TIME OF 'MARKET GARDEN'

9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen*
(theatre: Arnhem–Oosterbeek–Nijmegen–Elst)
- 42 x armoured cars (most halftrack)
- 2 x Jagdpanzer IVs
- 3 x Möbelwagen (mobile Flak full track)
- 1 x Flak half track

10th SS Panzer Divison *Frundsberg* (theatre: Arnhem–Elst)
- 8 x PzKpfw V Panthers
- 12 x PzKpfw IVs
- 4 x StuG IIIs
- 7 x armoured cars, halftrack
- 1 x P204 armoured scout car
- 1 x Flak (vierling) halftrack

Panzer Ersatz Regiment *Bielefeld* (Panzer Kampfgruppe Mielke)
(theatre: Arnhem–Elst)
- 2 x PzKpfw IVs
- 6 x PzKpfw IIIs

Schwere Panzer Kompanie Hummel (theatre: Arnhem–Elst)
- 12 x PzKpfw VI Tiger Is

Schwere Panzer Abteilung 506 (theatre: Oosterbeek–Elst)
- 28 x PzKpfw VI Tiger IIs

Sturmgeschütz Brigade 280 (theatre: Arnhem–Oosterbeek)
- 7 x StuG IIIs
- 3 x StuH 42Gs

Panzer Kompanie 244 (theatre: Oosterbeek)
- 1 x PzKpfw 35S
- 2 x PzKpfw B2
- 14 x Flammpanzer

Total number of armoured cars: 51
Total number of tanks: 104

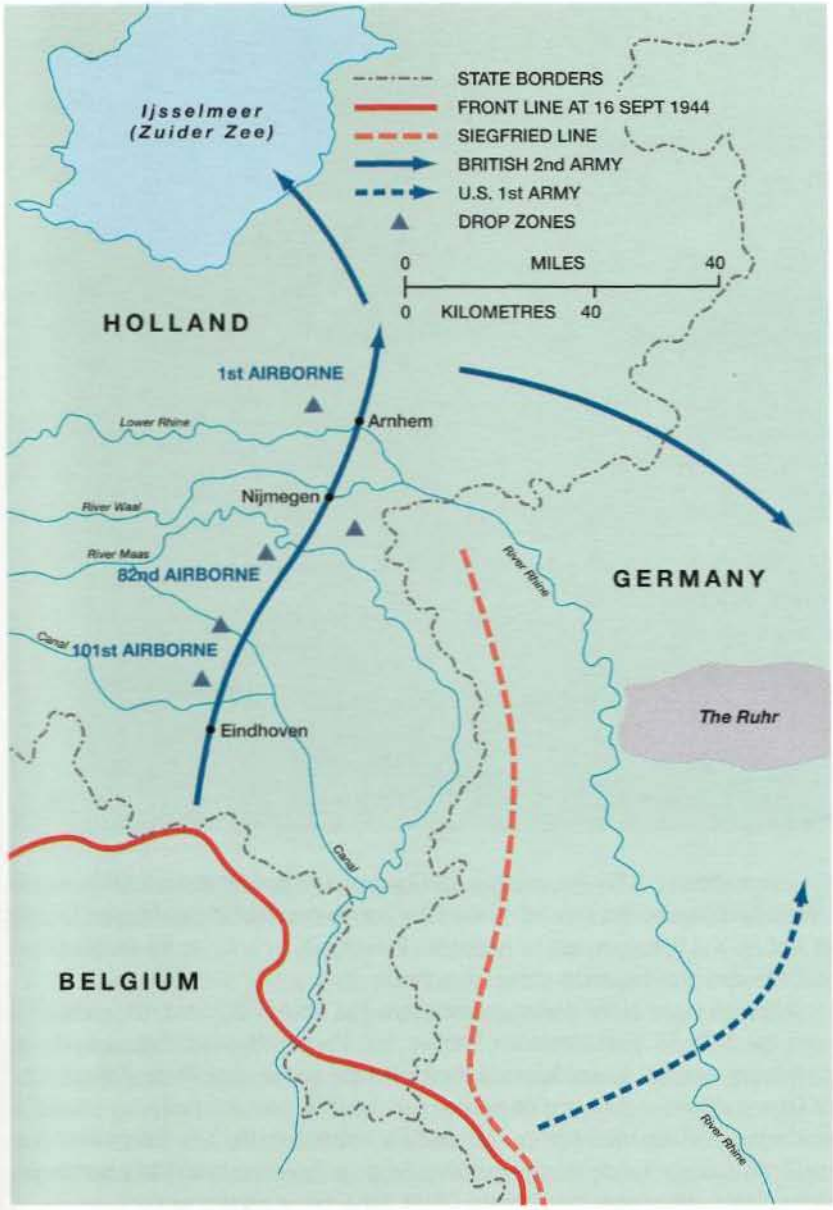
carried by nearly 500 gliders towed by Halifax, Sterling and Albemarle bombers. A pathfinder unit was sent ahead — this was a specialist unit of paratroopers who had the task of marking out the landing and drop zones. It consisted of 12 Stirling bombers and six C-47s.

Some of the gliders broke up in mid-air as they were being towed, and as they reached the coast of mainland Europe, anti-aircraft fire also began to take its toll. The C-47 planes transporting the US 101st Airborne Division (the 'Screaming Eagles') were particularly badly hit by flak, with more than 100 of the 424 aircraft being damaged and 16 were lost. The pilots from the IX Troop Carrier Command stayed on course, however. At 12:30, the first pathfinder troops were dropped, and within half an hour they had successfully marked out the landing and drop zones.

For the German troops stationed on the ground, the first sign that the offensive was about to begin was when they heard the sound of hundreds of aircraft coming their way. As the aircraft came into view, they were shocked to see the size of the approaching air armada. One German soldier — Lt Heinz Volz from the Regiment von Hoffman — said, 'At about midday we suddenly discerned an unearthly droning noise. ... A huge stream of transport aircraft and gliders approached. ... This enormous swarm was escorted by countless fighters, in particular Lightnings [the US twin-boom Lockheed P-38 Lightning].'

At 13:00, the main body of the Allied paratroopers began dropping from the skies; at the same time the gliders were released and began their landing approaches. In the Eindhoven sector, only 53 of the 70 gliders landed safely; however, most of the 7,000 'Screaming Eagles' paratroops made it without injury. The loss of so many gliders was a serious blow, as they carried most of the 101st Airborne's heavy equipment, including anti-tank weapons, jeeps and most of their supplies.

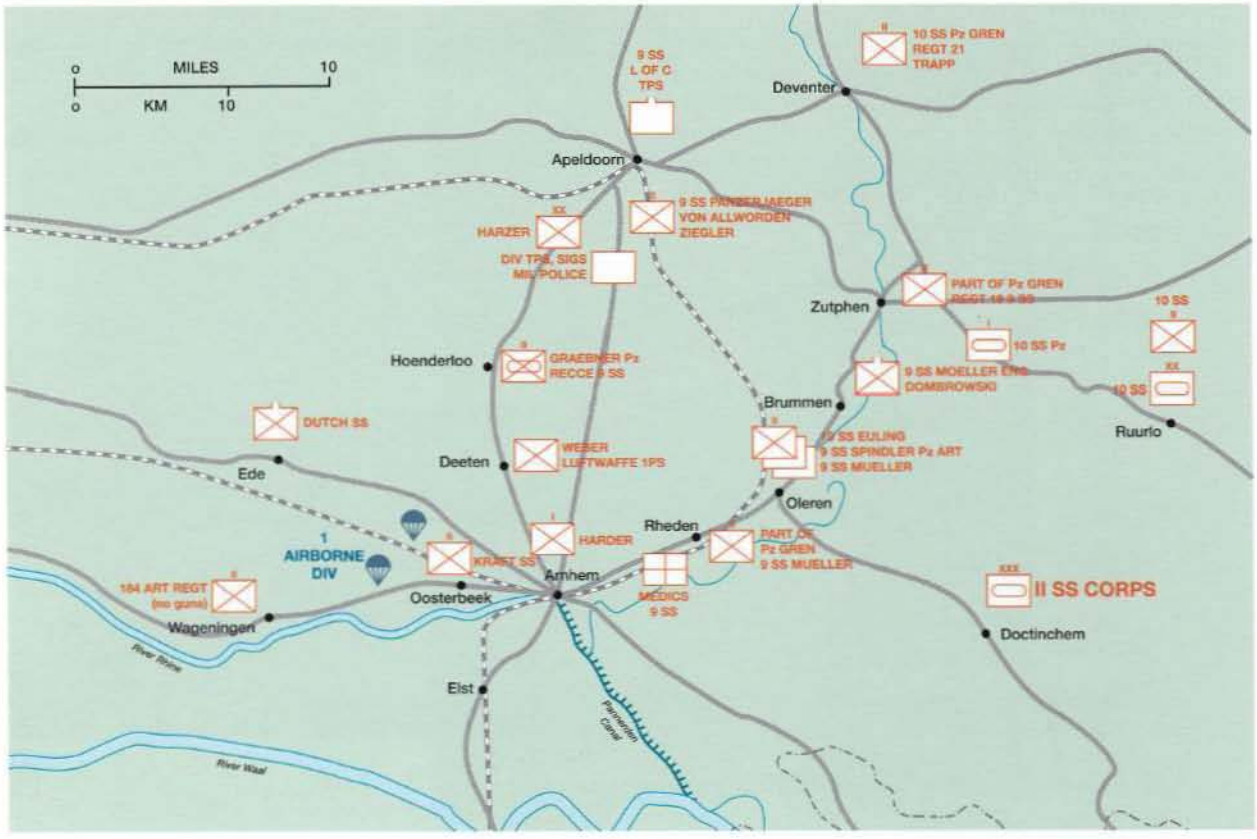
Another 4,500 paratroopers were inserted to the east of Groesbeek Heights. These were from the 82nd Airborne Division (the 'All Americans'), some of whom landed in gliders, whereas others jumped from transport planes. At around 13:15 another 2,000



Left: The plan for Operation 'Market Garden' — airborne landings would take the river bridges to allow the advance of British Second Army deep into Holland.

parachuted onto a landing zone near Overasselt (east of Grave). Further troops from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 504th Regiment jumped to the west end of the Grave Bridge. The 376th Parachute Field Artillery wasted little time in getting their equipment set up, and within the hour they were providing covering fire from ten 75mm howitzers. Up to this point not many troops had landed in *Hohenstaufen*'s area, but all this changed when 300 gliders appeared above Arnhem. Although nearly 40 were shot down, the best part of 5,200 men landed safely.

When Montgomery first made his plans for Operation 'Market Garden', he did not anticipate the presence of any elite SS Panzer troops. Although the commanders of these units — the *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg* divisions — were initially taken by surprise, it did not take them long to work out that the objective of the offensive was to secure the bridges leading up to and across the Rhine. These were situated at Eindhoven, Grave and Nijmegen. At 13:30, half an hour after the first Allied paratroopers began dropping,



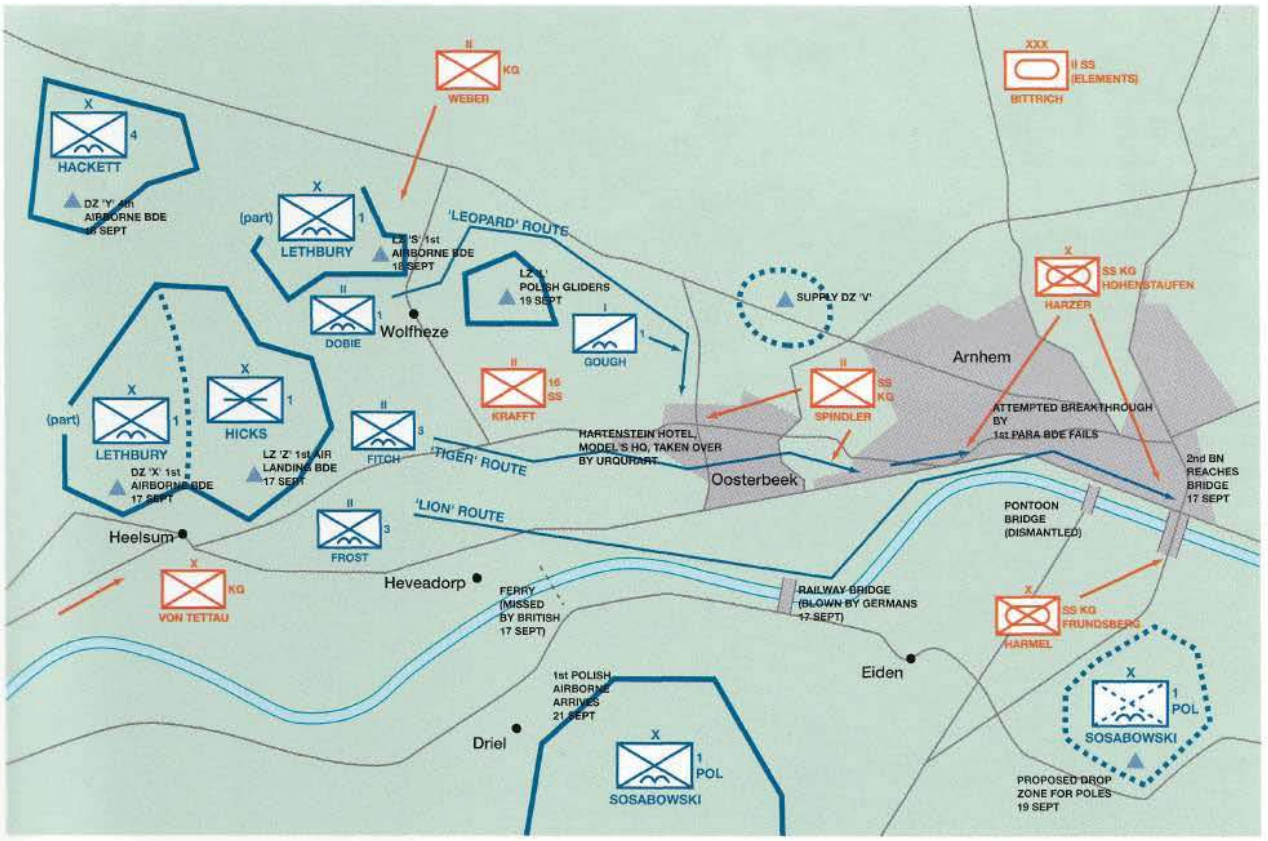
Above: The German units at Arnhem.

the commander of II SS Panzerkorps, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich, was in Doetinchem. Around this time he received the first reports of Allied paratroopers landing at Arnhem and Nijmegen, and he responded immediately by ordering the *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg* divisions into defensive action.

Although many of the *Hohenstaufen*'s units had already departed, one contingent from the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Training and Reserve Battalion happened to be performing exercises in woodlands to the east of the village of Wolfheze. Although the NCOs and officers of the battalion were all veterans, the three companies — consisting of 306 men — were mostly made up of partially trained recruits. These troops, who were under the command of SS-Sturmbannführer Sepp Kraft, were coincidentally next to one of the landing zones designated for the British 1st Airborne paratroops.

As soon as the drop began, Kraft immediately set about trying to establish a defensive line to stop the Allied troops from making their way towards Arnhem. Even though he only had a small number of men with him, his plan was to delay the British for long enough to allow reinforcements to be brought up. He also sent out reconnaissance patrols and moved two companies into position — one to attack the landing zone, the other to secure the main Wageningen–Arnhem road and the Ede–Arnhem railroad. He established his battalion headquarters at the Hotel Wolfheze, and by gathering every possible man he increased the unit's troop numbers to 435.

As the British 1st Airborne landed, Kraft's men attacked them using a combination of mortar, machine gun and rifle fire. Not knowing how many British troops they were up against, Kraft was worried about being encircled, and at 18:00 he ordered his men to fall back to a stronger defensive line put together by SS-Obersturmbannführer Ludwig


II KG WEBER
XXX II SS (ELEMENTS) BITTRICH
X 4 HACKETT
DZ 'Y' 4th AIRBORNE BDE 18 SEPT
(part) X 1 LETHBURY
LZ 'S' 1st AIRBORNE BDE 18 SEPT
'LEOPARD' ROUTE
LZ 'L' POLISH GLIDERS 19 SEPT
SUPPLY DZ 'V'
X SS KG HOHENSTAUFEN HARZER
II 1 DOBIE
Wolfheze
I 1 GOUGH
Arnhem
II 16 SS KRAFFT
II SS KG SPINDLER
ATTEMPTED BREAKTHROUGH BY 1st PARA BDE FAILS
(part) X 1 LETHBURY
DZ 'X' 1st AIRBORNE BDE 17 SEPT
X 1 HICKS
LZ 'Z' 1st AIR LANDING BDE 17 SEPT
II 3 FITCH
'TIGER' ROUTE
HARTENSTEIN HOTEL, MODEL 'S HQ, TAKEN OVER BY URQUHART
Oosterbeek
2nd BN REACHES BRIDGE 17 SEPT
'LION' ROUTE
PONTOON BRIDGE (DISMANTLED)
Heelsum
II 3 FROST
X KG VON TETTAU
Heveadorp
FERRY (MISSED BY BRITISH 17 SEPT)
RAILWAY BRIDGE (BLOWN BY GERMANS 17 SEPT)
X SS KG FRUNDSBERG HARMEL
Eiden
1st POLISH AIRBORNE ARRIVES 21 SEPT
X 1 POL SOSABOWSKI
Driel
X 1 POL SOSABOWSKI
PROPOSED DROP ZONE FOR POLES 19 SEPT

Above: German attacks on British units around Arnhem.

Spindler. This was being set up by the men of Kampfgruppe 'Spindler', itself composed of 16 units made up from what few troops remained in the *Hohenstaufen*'s armoured artillery regiment.

At 13:45, the Grave Bridge fell to Allied troops of the 82nd Airborne under Lt John S. Thompson. This had been one of its primary objectives, and it had been secured in less than an hour. Half an hour later, at 14:15, just before the XXX Corps began its advance, a 350-gun artillery barrage began at the Dutch-Belgian border. This, combined with bomber attacks, had the effect of decimating most of the troops who were attempting to hold the first line of German defences. Commanded by Major Helmut Kerutt, the high casualty rate left few survivors but enough survived for bitter fighting to take place. These troops managed to knock out nine Allied tanks using Panzerschrecke. For the Allies this was a major blow, as the wreckage blocked the road — the terrain on either side of the road being too boggy for other vehicles to pass by. The remaining German defenders were soon wiped out by fire from rocket-firing Typhoon fighter-bombers called in by the Irish Guards Armoured Group. They then brought up armoured bulldozers and moved the stricken tanks out of the way.

As the offensive continued, reports started filtering back to British intelligence officers about the presence of units from the Fifteenth Armee and the SS *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg* Panzer divisions. They were completely stunned by this news, as they had not expected these elite forces to be between the XXX Corps and Arnhem. It was quite clear that the operation was not going to go as planned, and that at best the relief troops would be late reaching the beleaguered paratroops, if, indeed, they ever got there.

Around 15:00, British 1st Airborne troops began landing near the Tafelberg Hotel in Oosterbeek where Generalfeldmarschall Walther Model, commander of Army Group B,

Above: Early prisoners at Arnhem: men from Kraft's *SS-Panzergrenadier Ausbildungs and Ersatz* (Training and Reserve) *Bataillon* 16. Three British glider pilots stand at the back guarding them.

Right: Although well under-strength, *Hohenstaufen* played a major part in defeating the British. Here, SS-Grenadiers are shown with StuGs of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280.

Above: This photograph was taken by Luftwaffe photographer Jacobsen of PK Luftflotte 3 on 19 September. It is part of sequence of photographs that show the crucial battle as 1st Airborne's main force tried to reach Arnhem bridge. Here, the StuG IIIs of Kampfgruppe 'Möller' move into action.

Left: Captured Waffen-SS troops cut wood under guard.

had his headquarters. He was convinced that this was the Allied objective, and in a state of shock he moved to SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich's II SS Panzerkorps headquarters at Doetinchem. There he formed the Kampfgruppe 'Harzer' from what remained of the *Hohenstaufen*, and sent the unit to advance on Arnhem under the command of Standartenführer Walther Harzer. These troops, who were accompanied by the 6th Parachute Regiment, had orders to reconnoitre and secure the Rhine River bridge at Arnhem. They were also to ensure that the town itself did not fall into enemy hands. The *Frundsberg* was then sent to hold Nijmegen with similar orders. Bittrich desperately wanted the bridges to be blown up so that they could not fall into Allied hands, but Model would not listen to his pleas, as he wanted them to remain standing so that he could launch his counter-attacks across them.

If matters were not already bad enough for the Allies, they got much worse when a complete set of operational plans was found by German forces in a briefcase amongst the wreckage of a crashed glider. These were handed to Generaloberst Kurt Student, who was delighted to find they listed exact details of the landing zones, objectives and timetables. As a result of this windfall, Student sent extra forces to secure the bridges targeted by the Allies.

By 15:00, the *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg* divisions were beginning to take up their positions to the west of Arnhem, between the 1st Airborne and Arnhem bridge. At 15:30, lead elements of *Hohenstaufen* engaged paratroopers from the 1st Airborne in Oosterbeek, halting their advance. On top of this, the British had other problems to deal

Above: Keeping your weapon clean is a prerequisite for the infantryman. This Waffen-SS soldier is cleaning his Kar98 rifle.

Above left: The classic view of the airdrop on DZ 'X'. This aerial view of paratroops of the 1st Airborne Division airdrop was taken from a photoreconnaissance Spitfire on 17 September 1944.

Below left: Nijmegen Bridge over the Waal was captured by men of US 82nd Airborne Division and the Grenadier Guards on 20 September.

with — their radio sets had not been working properly ever since they landed. This had led to many units becoming isolated. In desperation, some of their officers tried to pinpoint each other on foot. In the confusion, several got cut off from their men, leading to further disarray.

At 18:00, just as British troops under Colonel Frost reached the bridge at Oosterbeek, the German defenders blew it up. An hour later, Hauptsturmführer Gräbner, commander of *Hohenstaufen*'s Aufklärungs Abteilung (reconnaissance battalion) crossed Arnhem road bridge at the head of a 40-vehicle column. Temporarily assigned to Armeegruppe B, his orders were to scout the roads to Nijmegen, and although his men swept both sides of the highway, they found nothing.

Less than half an hour after Gräbner's men had passed by, a small group of Royal Engineers under Captain Eric Mackay reached the 2,000ft-long Arnhem bridge. This spanned the Lower Rhine from the city on the north across to the south bank which was in open country. The British troops were then joined by others under Colonel Frost, and together they attacked the Germans defending the bridge. Frost's men had seen that a quantity of explosives was being prepared for use as demolition charges, and so they brought up a flamethrower and used it to set them off. After a fierce firefight, the Germans were beaten back — they did manage, however, to hold the south end of the bridge. The British then secured the north end, taking over some nearby buildings from where they were able to cover the bridge and the adjoining streets.

When Hauptsturmführer Paul Gräbner's *Hohenstaufen* reconnaissance battalion reached Nijmegen, they engaged the US 82nd Airborne who were approaching the bridge, pinning them down with sustained fire.

At this stage Model was still under the belief that the Allies' objective had been to capture his headquarters. Generaloberst Kurt Student, however, did his best to convince him that the operational plans that had been found in the crashed glider were genuine. Although Model was still unsure, he did make sure that information concerning further troop and supply drops were passed to all the anti-aircraft units in the area. This action proved to be of immense significance over the course of the next week, as the subsequent Allied reinforcements were severely weakened by the damage inflicted by these flak units.

Right: The StuG IIIs (three platoons) and StuH 42Gs (one platoon) of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 arrrived on 19 September. This is the vehicle of the commander of the the 3rd Platoon.

Above: Waffen-SS MG34 team. The MG is mounted on its three-legged AA mount. The loader has a Kar98 slung over his back.

That evening SS-Brigadeführer Heinz Harmel, the commander of the *Frundsberg* Division, returned from Berlin after a frantic drive, arriving at about 23:30. He immediately went to see his commanding officer, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich, from whom he received an urgent briefing about the disposition of Allied forces. Bittrich ordered him to take the *Frundsberg* Division south to secure the bridge at Nijmegen. He told him at the same time that *Hohenstaufen* would deal with the British holding the north end of Arnhem Bridge.

As the first day of Operation 'Market Garden' drew to a close, the Allies were still optimistic that the situation could be salvaged, even though their intelligence concerning German troops in the area had been woefully inadequate. The US 101st and 82nd Airborne had both managed to secure their objectives, but several key bridges — especially that at Nijmegen — had still not yet been secured. Progress in establishing the land corridor from the Allied front lines to Arnhem had been very slow.

During the night of Sunday, 17 September, Kampfgruppe 'Spindler' had been working to establish a defensive line between the Ede–Arnhem road and the rail junction at Utrechtseweg. This was intended to sever the communication lines of the British units at Arnhem and to ensure that others would not be able to advance to reinforce them. By the small hours of Monday 18th, this line was in place.

Meanwhile *Hohenstaufen* had been given some extra men by the commander of the German forces in the Netherlands, General Christiansen. He had been ordered to help back up the under-strength SS units in whatever manner he could. These troops, who were under the command of Generalleutnant Hans von Tettau, the commander of

Training in Holland, were formed into Kampfgruppe 'von Tettau'. Although they were only a low-grade mix of static defence and training battalions, during the night they managed to harass the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

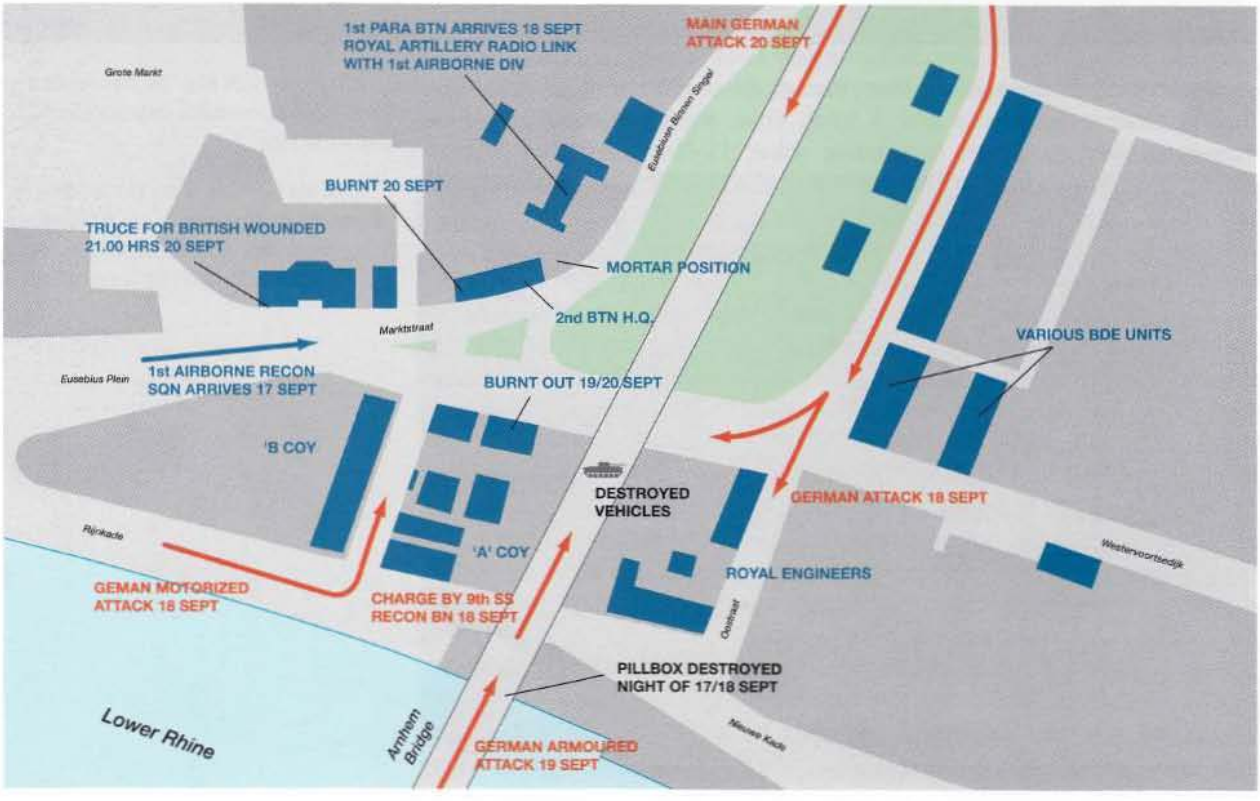
With the arrival of first light, von Tettau personally directed a well co-ordinated assault aimed at displacing British troops of the 1st Airborne Division from their hold on the drop zones at Wolfheze. They attacked from the west while Kampfgruppe 'Harzer' came at them from the east. Throughout this time the British radios were still not working properly, and so communications remained very poor. While only a few of von Tettau's men succeeded in taking any of the drop zones, they did succeed in stopping the British moving forward to link up with their forces at the Arnhem Bridge .

At Oosterbeek the fighting continued throughout the night, as the British attempted to reach the Arnhem Bridge, and the Germans in their turn tried to reach the Allied drop zones. Intense conflicts occurred along the front lines, although it would appear that for much of the time no one on either side actually knew where the front lines were. SS-Hauptsturmführer Möller stated that it was '... like a wild west shootout. There was no front, sections and half-sections fought scattered actions against similar size British groups. There was no discernible line on the English side either.'

At Arnhem the British paratroopers continued to arrive at the north end of the bridge, and by dawn their commander, Colonel Frost, calculated that he had around 600 or 700 men in place. Although there were several other British battalions nearby, the *Hohenstaufen* troops of Kampfgruppe 'Harzer' and the remains of the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Training and Reserve Battalion had them pinned down and as a result they were unable to reach Arnhem.

Throughout the night the British paratroops tried to take the southern end of the bridge, and twice they attempted to rush the German defences; however, both times fierce fire eventually drove them back. The Germans were no less determined to retake

Below: The battle for Arnhem Bridge — the bridge too far.



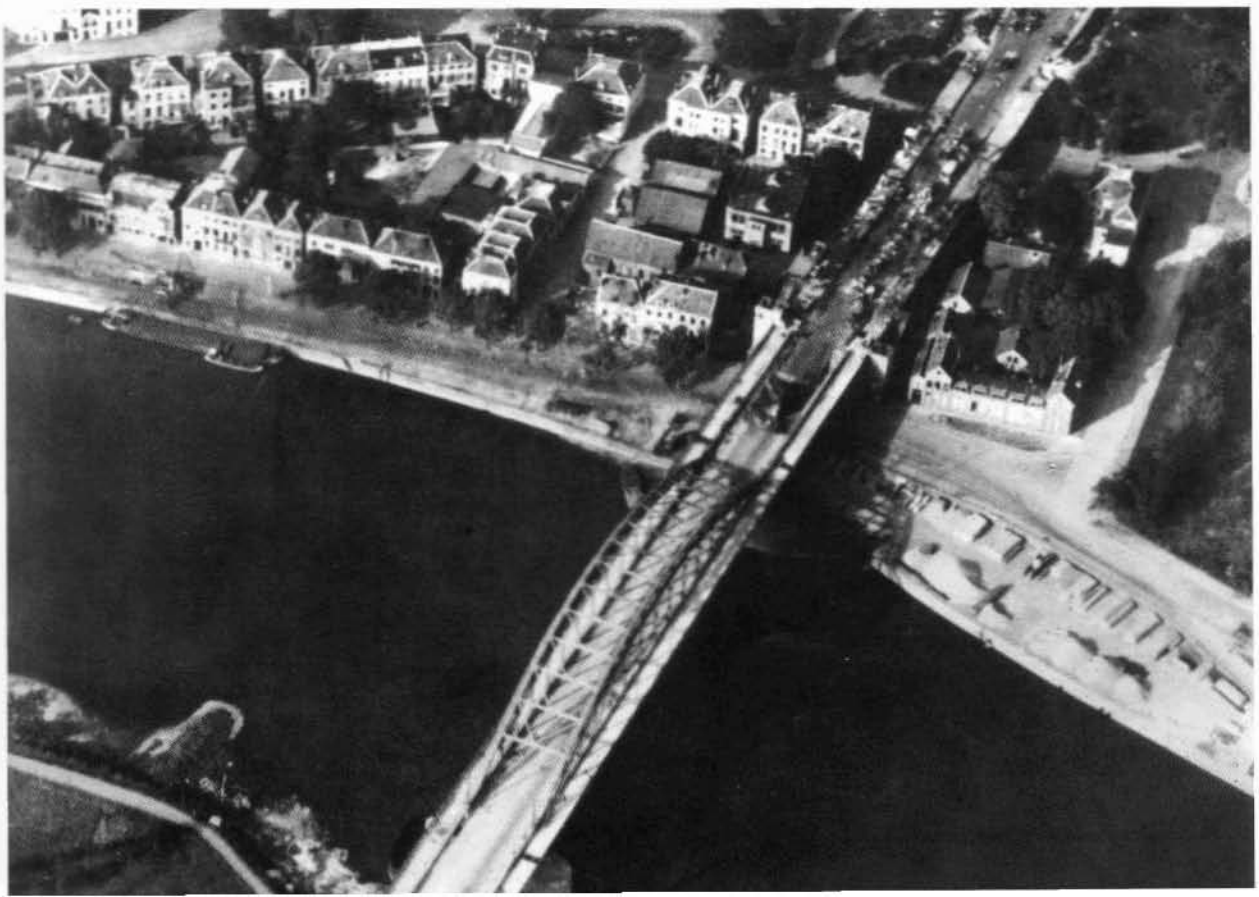
the north end of the bridge. When Hauptsturmführer Gräbner's *Hohenstaufen* reconnaissance battalion arrived in armoured vehicles, they thought that the British forces were too lightly armed to withstand a determined attack. Gräbner assessed the situation, and then set out to cross the bridge. The British lookouts saw them coming, and although their hope was that these were units of XXX Corps coming to their rescue, it was soon realised that the advancing forces were in fact Germans in armoured cars and a halftrack.

Rather than alert Gräbner's forces by opening fire too soon, the defending paratroopers waited until they were well within range. They then released a barrage from PIATs (Projectile, Infantry, Anti-Tank) and 6-pounder anti-tank guns, destroying nearly all the German reconnaissance battalion vehicles. The supporting infantry were then raked with machine-gun fire and bursts from flamethrowers. After two hours of fierce fighting, the remaining German forces withdrew to safety, although Gräbner himself — who had only been presented with the Knight's Cross by Standartenführer Harzer the day before — was killed in the action. The bridge was left covered with dead soldiers and the wreckage of burning vehicles.

The more experienced German reinforcements who were brought up to Arnhem — especially those who were veterans of the Eastern Front — expected the conflict to be only a short affair. They were shocked at the ferocity of the British defence. SS squad leader Alfred Ringsdorf, for instance, claimed that it was far worse than anything he had gone through in Russia. After some desperate actions whilst trying to clear houses, he said that: 'We fought to gain inches, cleaning out one room after the other. It was absolute hell.'

German senior commanders decided that they needed to send every available man into the action. To this end, the 3rd Battalion SS Landstorm Nederland — which at this stage was still in training in Hoogeveen — was ordered to move to Arnhem to be

Below: Arnhem bridge as seen by a photorecce Spitfire of No 16 PR Squadron on the afternoon of 18 September. That morning SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 under SS-Hauptsturmführer Viktor Gräbner tried to pass the bridge from south to north on its way back from a recce towards Nijmegen. His SdKfz 234 armoured cars got through: the other vehicles were shot up and can be seen in the road above the bridge.



incorporated into *Hohenstaufen*. Commanded by SS-Obersturmbannführer Hermann Delfs, the unit had few weapons and only about 600 men, arranged in four companies. Since they were still untrained, Harzer decided to keep them back in reserve, but later changed his mind and added the unit to Kampfgruppe 'Spindler' to help hold the defensive line. The lack of available transport vehicles meant that SS Landstorm Nederland had to travel to Arnhem from Hoogeveen on bicycles, and it wasn't until the Monday night that they finally arrived. The next day they were moved to Betuwe to assist with the defence of Elst.

While the Germans were trying to get enough men together to mount a strong defence, the Allied advance on Eindhoven from Valkenswaard that morning had experienced many problems. Early morning fog initially prevented the tanks of the Irish Guards Armoured Group from moving forward, but when it cleared they found themselves under attack from four 88mm anti-tank guns. Under normal circumstances, this would not have been a problem as Typhoon fighter-bombers would have soon dispatched them with a rocket attack. On this occasion though, the aircraft could not fly as their bases were still fog-bound. A long delay resulted before British troops managed to silence the German gun crews by working their way around and attacking them from behind.

The Allies took another four hours to reach Eindhoven, but when they got to the Son Bridge at 19:00, it had already been blown up. Although they had made some progress, they still had another 32 miles to go to reach the besieged troops at Arnhem. Not only did they have to work out how to get across the Son River, but the US 82nd Airborne had failed to take the bridge at Nijmegen. They had, however, successfully managed to take the bridges at Grave, Heuman and Honinghutie.

At Groesbeek Heights, the landing and drop zones were coming under increasingly heavy fire from large numbers of German troops. The defending US 82nd Airborne paratroopers were outnumbered five to one, so they were not happy to hear that their

Below: German troops dug in around Oosterbeek.

reinforcements had been delayed. Early that afternoon, another massive air armada appeared in the skies — this was composed of over 1,300 C-47s, 340 Stirling bombers and 252 B-24s escorted by around 900 fighter planes. They towed with them over 1,200 gliders, and these were packed with men and equipment vital for the operation.

The aircraft were met with intense flak as a result of the decision by Model to forewarn his anti-aircraft units of the operational plans recovered shortly after the offensive first began. These men shot down more than 20 of the escort fighters, as well as 11 bombers; they damaged a further 120.

A total of 454 gliders were designated for the US 82nd Airborne, but only 385 managed to land safely. This provided the unit with an extra 1,800 artillerymen, 177 jeeps and 60 guns. Of the 450 gliders intended for the 101st Airborne's landing zones, 428 got down safely. By this time the unit was getting short of men and ammunition, so the arrival of nearly 2,700 fresh troops along with large amounts of munitions and extra vehicles was very welcome. A lot of the supply drops ended up in German hands, however — this at a time when they were also desperate for more supplies.

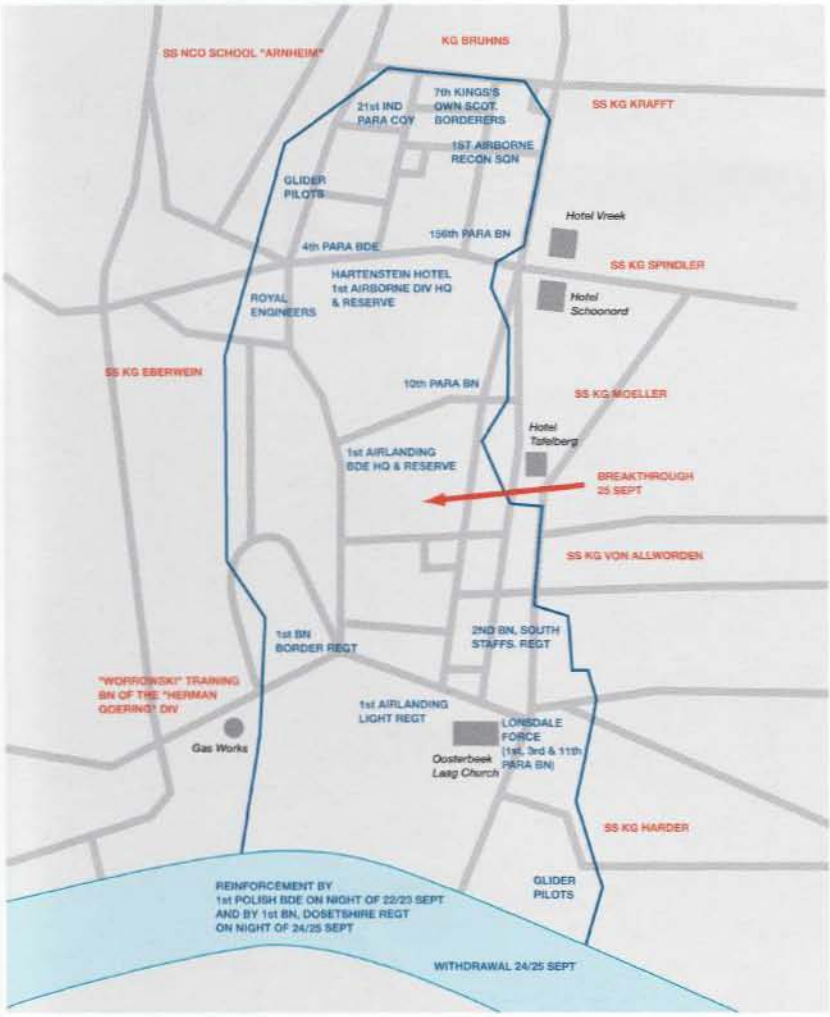
As the Allied reinforcements continued to arrive, Bittrich became ever more concerned that Nijmegen Bridge might fall into enemy hands, and when Model visited him in the afternoon of Monday, 18 September, he did his best to persuade the field marshal to allow it to be blown up. Model, however, made his feelings clear — the bridge was to stay standing. In order to ensure its security, he had ordered Generaloberst Student's First Fallschirmjägerarmee to make sure the Allies were kept well to the south of this vital crossing point. He also ordered Bittrich to regain control of the bridge at Arnhem within 24 hours, so that his tanks could be pulled out of the conflict and used to stop the British advances further south. The next day — Tuesday, 19 September — the British XXX Corps reached Nijmegen.

Above: On 24 September PK photographer Seuffert took combat pictures around Oosterbeek. This shows one of the Sturmhaubitze 42Gs, which were armed with short-barrelled 10.5cm howitzers, of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280's 2nd Platoon nosing past a British parachute.

Above: Shortly after taking the photograph on page 47, Seuffert took this photograph of infantry waiting to follow the tanks. Note NCOs with pistols and caps in front

Meanwhile at Arnhem, the British paratroopers under Colonel Frost continued to wait for reinforcements to arrive. They still held the north end of the bridge, but the fighting had been severe. The expectation was that the 1st Polish Parachute Brigade would drop on the other side of the river in the early hours of the next morning and attack the Germans from there. This would also allow them to secure the south end of the bridge.

On Wednesday, 20 September *Hohenstaufen*'s armoured reconnaissance battalion made a decisive assault on the Arnhem Bridge, and succeeded in pushing the lightly armed British paratroopers back from their positions. The same day other elements of the *Hohenstaufen* were doing their best to hold a series of strongpoints along the Waal River at Nijmegen. The Kampfgruppe 'Hanke' occupied the Fort Hof Van Holland, and the Kampfgruppe 'Euling' took over Hunner Park. At 15:00 this came under an amphibious assault launched by the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the US 82nd Airborne Division. Although Kampfgruppe 'Euling' managed to fight this attack off, they were later displaced from Fort Valkhof by the British Grenadier Guards, who then crossed the Waal between 18:00 and 19:00. Realising that Arnhem was a key factor in the offensive, the Kampfgruppe '*Frundsberg*' was then hastily withdrawn from Nijmegen to help defend the bridge there.


SS NCO SCHOOL "ARNHEIM"
KG BRUHNS
21st IND PARA COY
7th KINGS'S OWN SCOT. BORDERERS
SS KG KRAFFT
1ST AIRBORNE RECON SQN
GLIDER PILOTS
Hotel Vreek
156th PARA BN
4th PARA BDE
SS KG SPINDLER
HARTENSTEIN HOTEL
1st AIRBORNE DIV HQ & RESERVE
ROYAL ENGINEERS
Hotel Schoonord
SS KG EBERWEIN
10th PARA BN
SS KG MOELLER
Hotel Tafelberg
1st AIRLANDING BDE HQ & RESERVE
BREAKTHROUGH 25 SEPT
SS KG VON ALLWORDEN
1st BN BORDER REGT
2ND BN, SOUTH STAFFS. REGT
"WORRONSKI" TRAINING BN OF THE "HERMAN GOERING" DIV
1st AIRLANDING LIGHT REGT
LONSDALE FORCE (1st, 3rd & 11th PARA BN)
Gas Works
Oosterbeek Laag Church
SS KG HARDER
GLIDER PILOTS
REINFORCEMENT BY 1st POLISH BDE ON NIGHT OF 22/23 SEPT AND BY 1st BN, DOSETSHIRE REGT ON NIGHT OF 24/25 SEPT
WITHDRAWAL 24/25 SEPT

Left: The Oosterbeek perimeter. There was intense figting here, particularly after the remnants of the parachute troops were forced back into the perimeter. Finally, on 25 September, the defenders were given the order to leave their positions and make their way to the banks of the lower Rhine where boats awaited them. They had been brought by Operation 'Berlin' — units of 260 and 253 Field Companies, RE, and 20 and 23 Field Companies of the Canadian RE, had transported their boats from Nijmegen to Arnhem.

The next day, Thursday, 21 September, saw a determined push by *Hohenstaufen* to wipe out the British 1st Airborne Division, and they succeeded in driving them back as far as Oosterbeek. On Saturday, 23 September, the Allies were doing all they could to rescue the remaining troops of the British 1st Airborne Division. They were surrounded in Oosterbeek by the men of Kampfgruppe 'Harzer', although they were aided by the fact that the unit's heavy Tiger tanks were not suited to the town's narrow streets. Their situation was dire — they were nearly out of ammunition and, to make matters worse, further Allied supply drops that afternoon were a complete failure. All of the new equipment and ammunition was dropped on German-held territory. Meanwhile, anxious to check that all was well, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich travelled to Elst to check that everything was under control, and he was assured that the Nijmegen–Arnhem road was secure.

At Veghel, the Allied attempt to form a land corridor to Arnhem continued, albeit very slowly. British tanks and US troops from the 101st Airborne Division fought their way north against heavy opposition. At 22:00 that night, the main body of the 130th Brigade, 43rd Infantry Division, arrived at Driel.

At Arnhem, on the morning of Sunday, 24 September, Model finally received the reinforcements he had been promised ever since the Allied offensive began, when 60

new Tiger tanks arrived. At this stage the besieged British forces were already on the very edge of collapsing — although they were short of manpower, their biggest problem was simply that they were almost out of ammunition. They were also experiencing regular mortar bombardments, after which there were usually attacks by armour-backed infantry. There were nearly 1,300 injured men inside the British perimeter, most of whom had been moved into the cellars of local houses. Many of the places where the wounded were lying were being hit regularly by artillery shells.

At 9:30 on the morning of Sunday, 24 September, exasperated by the conditions that the wounded men were experiencing, Dr Graeme Warrack, who was the division's chief medical officer, decided that something should be done to try and evacuate them. He sought and gained permission from his superior officer — Major General Roy Urquhart — to try and arrange a temporary truce. In order to broker the deal, Warrack walked over to the German lines under the cover of a white flag. He was quickly taken to *Hohenstaufen*'s chief medical officer, SS-Sturmbannführer Egon Skalka, who agreed that the evacuation of the large numbers of wounded men was a matter of the highest priority. Together they set out for Harzer's headquarters, where negotiations began.

Left: *Hohenstaufen* troops watch as British wounded hobble into captivity as a late version StuG III Ausf G of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 passes.

Bittrich arrived shortly afterwards, and by 10:30 they had agreed that all firing would stop at 15:00 for two hours. Warrack then returned to his lines, and when the cease-fire began, did his best to help supervise the removal of the wounded of both sides by a convoy of German vehicles. At 17:00, the firing started up again, and battle was rejoined.

Elsewhere the Allies were still doing their best to drive forwards to relieve the beleaguered troops in the Arnhem area. At 18:00, Colonel Gerald Tilly, leading a part of the 43rd Infantry Division and backed by Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski's Polish paratroopers, set out from Driel and pushed towards the Rhine in an attempt to cross the river. The plan was to establish crossing points so that the entire 43rd Infantry Division could be used to try and encircle the Germans from the left flank. While these plans were being put into action, however, the commander of the trapped British 1st Airborne Division, Major General Roy Urquhart, sent a message back to Allied headquarters making it clear that his men could hold out no longer. This meant that there was insufficient time for the encirclement of German forces to take place, and so the Colonel Tilly was instead told to change his plans to help withdraw the 1st Airborne Division across the Rhine using assault craft. The boats failed to arrive on time, and in the end

Above: Tiger I Ausf E of the 3rd Company of SS Panzer Abteilung 101 in spring 1944 near Rouen. It bears the I SS Panzerkorps crossed-keys insignia and the oakleaves symbolic of the Ritterkreuz awarded to SS-Obergruppenführer Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich, whose vehicle this was. *Hohenstaufen* became part of II SS Panzerkorps in Dietrich's Sixth Panzerarmee in October 1944.

turned up several hours late in the small hours of Monday, 25 September. Although many men were successfully evacuated, large numbers were captured by the Germans before they could get away.

On Monday, 25 September, the British 43rd Wessex Division took the village of Elst, which was less than five miles from Arnhem. It was not close enough, however, and the *Hohenstaufen*'s strong defensive line proved too much for them to break through to rescue their comrades at Oosterbeek. A few Allied troops managed to escape, but after several more days of bombardment, on Friday, 29 September, the remaining British and Polish forces surrendered. They were out of ammunition and too weak to sustain their defences any longer. Of the 10,000 men who were dropped into Arnhem, only 2,300 managed to get away. 1,400 were killed in the action and over 6,000 were taken prisoner. News of the Allies' defeat was received with great joy by Hitler, who conferred the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on the commander of the Battle Group, SS-Standartenführer Walther Harzer.

WESTPHALIA

Before the Hohenstaufen underwent the fierce fighting at Arnhem, they were badly in need of a refit — afterwards they were in an even worse state. In early October 1944, they were moved to Bad Salzuflen, Westphalia, for rest and reorganisation as part of the

Sixth Panzerarmee under the command of SS-Oberstgruppenführer Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich. The Sixth Panzerarmee was composed of I Panzerkorps, including the *Leibstandarte* and *Hitlerjugend* divisions. The II Panzerkorps was made up of the *Das Reich*, *Hohenstaufen*, and Panzer Lehr divisions. SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich continued to command II Panzerkorps, and SS-Oberführer Stadler commanded *Hohenstaufen*.

Hohenstaufen was divided up into various units, and these were distributed around Paderborn, Gütersloh, Siegen, Hamm and Münster. As part of the reorganisation Kampfgruppe 'Harzer' was incorporated into *Hohenstaufen* along with many extra men sourced from the Luftwaffe and various battle-scarred units. Resupplying the Sixth Panzerarmee was a slow process for two reasons — not only was the German war machine vastly over-stretched and under-resourced, but the railway system was under constant attack from the air.

While the refit was underway, the division was trained in night-fighting manoeuvres as well as how to operate with the other divisions of Sixth Panzerarmee. Throughout this period, all the units in the area had to stay camouflaged during the day to avoid attack by Allied fighter-bombers. This meant that vehicles were only able to move at night.

It was at this time that Sixth Panzerarmee was renamed Sixth SS Panzerarmee, and was commanded by SS-Oberstgruppenführer und Generaloberst der Waffen-SS Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich. The main components were *Hohenstaufen*, *Leibstandarte*, *Das Reich* and *Hitlerjugend*. Other units included the 3rd Panzergrenadier Division, the 3rd Fallschirmjäger Division and four Volksgrenadier divisions (VGDs). For political reasons, Hitler wanted to see his elite SS men outshine the regular army's forces, and so he gave them the best troops and equipment available. Sixth SS Panzerarmee was given about 500 tanks and armoured assault guns, including 90 PzKpfw VI Tiger tanks, as well as a heavy grouping of artillery.

On 12 December, Sixth SS Panzerarmee was moved to Bad Münstereifel, near Aachen, in readiness for its next operation in the Ardennes. *Hohenstaufen* was then moved to the south of Blankenheim and then shortly afterwards north to the Stadtkyll-Juenkerath-Blankenheim area.

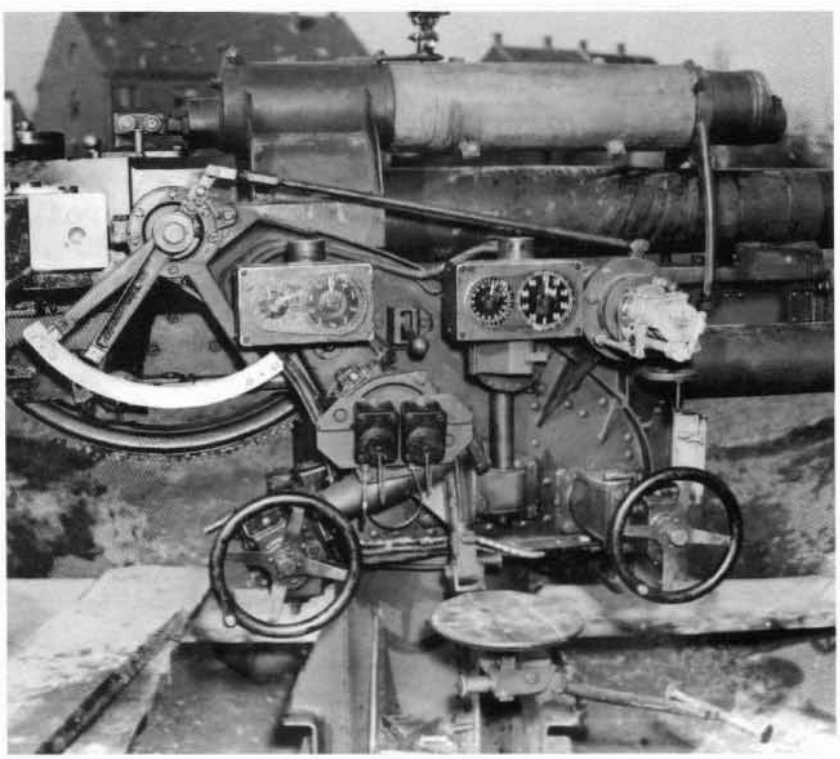
THE ARDENNES

Hitler's last offensive on the Western Front was a push through the Ardennes. This was initially called *Unternehmen 'Herbstnebel'* (Operation 'Autumn mist'), but then renamed '*Wacht am Rhein*' (Watch on the Rhine), although it was also called the Von Rundstedt Offensive. It soon became known to the wider world, however, as the Battle of the Bulge. The German army commanders did their best to dissuade Hitler from going ahead with the plan, but he did not listen. His hope was that his forces could inflict enough of a mauling on the Allies for them to agree to a peace deal. This would avoid Germany being invaded from the west, and would allow his armies to focus on fighting back the Soviet Red Army. Hitler used all his reserve troops and what was left of the army's equipment, so it was clear that if the offensive failed, it would effectively be all over for Germany. The only issue in doubt would then be whether the Russians would get to Berlin first.

The operation was commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Walther Model, commanding Armeegruppe B. His forces were composed of the Seventh Army under General der Panzertruppen Erich Brandenberger, the Fifth Panzerarmee under General der Panzertruppen Hasso von Manteuffel and the Sixth SS Panzerarmee under Generaloberst der Waffen-SS 'Sepp' Dietrich. The Sixth SS Panzerarmee, which was the strongest of the armies taking part, was given the task of taking the bridges over the Meuse River near Liège, and then the city of Antwerp. This was the Allies' principal supply port, and so of major strategic importance.

Above: Troops of Sixth SS Panzerarmee pass a Panther. Advancing in the northern sector of the German thrust, Sixth SS Panzerarmee included I and II SS Panzerkorps. The latter was spearheaded by the 2nd SS Panzer Division *Das Reich* and by *Hohenstaufen*. *Hohenstaufen* reached its start line on 18 December and fought its way toward Manhay and Trois Ponts before being replaced by the 12th Volksgrenadiers.

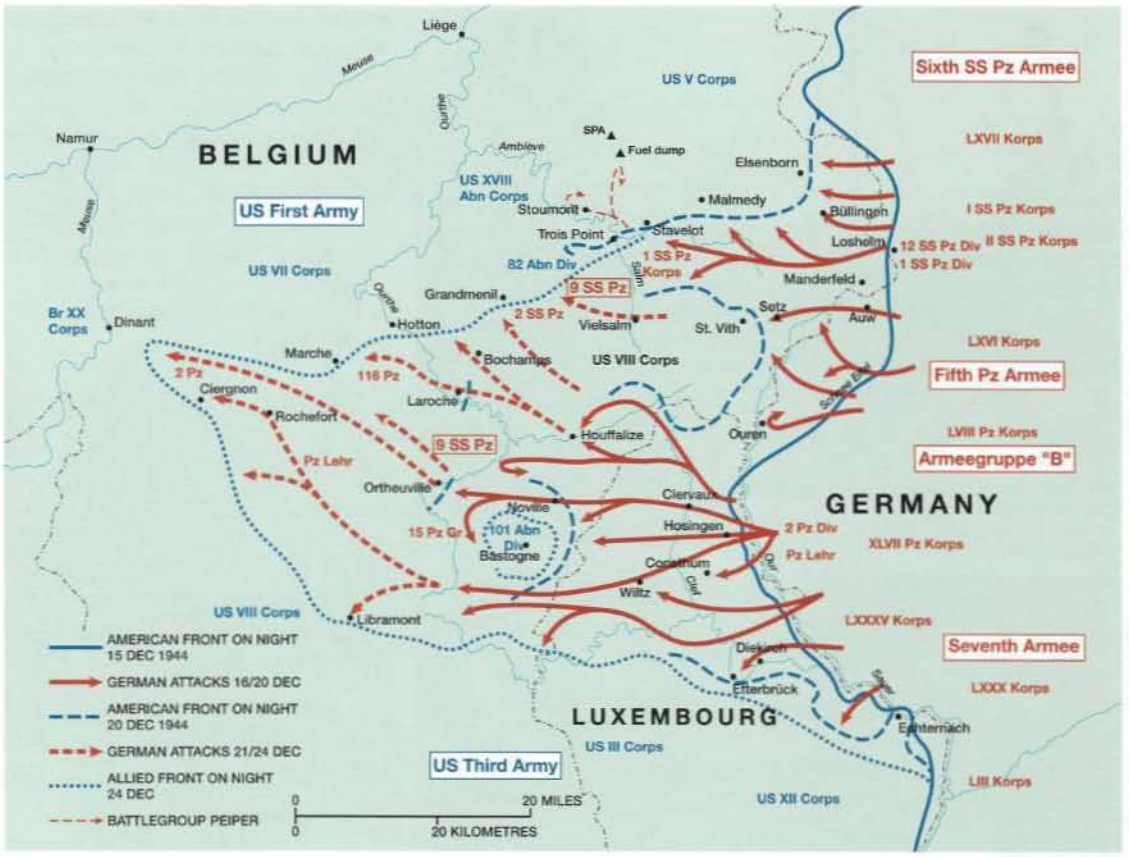
Right: Fire control of a knocked out Flak 37 AA gun. The bad weather helped the German attack and ensured that Allied air superiority was nullified. As soon as the weather cleared, the paucity of German anti-air assets was revealed.



Above left: King Tiger of SS schwere (heavy) Panzer Abteilung 501 passes a line of captured US troops of 99th Infantry Division near St Vith on 18 December. The Tigers — PzKpfw VI Tiger I and II — were organized into heavy battalions and attached to larger formations. In the Ardennes there were three such units: the 501st, 506th and 301st FKL (*Funklenk* = radio-controlled). The 501st had 30 vehicles operational on 17 December — it was supposed to have 30 Tiger IIs and 45 Tiger Is. It was attached to the 1st SS Panzer Division *Leibstandarte* as part of I SS Panzerkorps.

Below left: Scavenging for supplies — German troops inspect abandoned US equiment.

Bottom left: By 22 December *Hohenstaufen* had been committed to the southern flank of *Leibstandarte*, part of I SS Panzerkorps but it was not enough. Surrounded at La Gleize, out of fuel (Luftwaffe airdrops provided enough to keep the radios running), pounded by artillery, Kampfgruppe 'Peiper' left its heavy equipment, wounded and a small rearguard, and slipped away on foot. One of the vehicles left behind was Tiger II Nr. 334 which had been blocking the American advance at Borgoumont.


Liège
Meuse
Ourthe
Amblève
SPA
Fuel dump
Namur
BELGIUM
Sambre
US First Army
US XVIII Abn Corps
US V Corps
Sixth SS Pz Armee
LXVII Korps
Elsenborn
Malmedy
Büllingen
I SS Pz Korps
Losheim
12 SS Pz Div
II SS Pz Korps
1 SS Pz Div
Stoumont
Trois Point
Stavelot
82 Abn Div
1 SS Pz Korps
9 SS Pz
Manderfeld
US VII Corps
Br XX Corps
Dinant
Grandmenil
2 SS Pz
Vielsalm
St. Vith
Setz
Auw
Hotton
Marche
Bochamps
US VIII Corps
LXVI Korps
Fifth Pz Armee
2 Pz
116 Pz
Clerqnon
Laroche
Rochefort
Houffalize
Ouren
LVIII Pz Korps
Armeegruppe "B"
9 SS Pz
Pz Lehr
Ortheuville
Neville
Ciervaux
GERMANY
15 Pz Gr
101 Abn Div
Bastogne
Hosingen
2 Pz Div
Pz Lehr
XLVII Pz Korps
Our
Clerf
Wiltz
Consthum
US VIII Corps
Libramont
LXXXV Korps
Seventh Armee
Diekirch
Ettelbrück
Sûre
LXXX Korps
LUXEMBOURG
Echternach
US III Corps
US Third Army
III Korps
US XII Corps
AMERICAN FRONT ON NIGHT 15 DEC 1944
GERMAN ATTACKS 16/20 DEC
AMERICAN FRONT ON NIGHT 20 DEC 1944
GERMAN ATTACKS 21/24 DEC
ALLIED FRONT ON NIGHT 24 DEC
BATTLEGROUP PEIPER
0
20 MILES
0
20 KILOMETRES

The Ardennes Offensive, which began at 05:30 on 16 December 1944, started with a massive artillery barrage from just about every piece the Germans could lay their hands on. This included all manner of weapons ranging from mortars to howitzers, rocket launchers, 88mm anti-tank guns and even 14-inch railway guns. The offensive lasted from 16 December to 28 January 1945 and involved more than a million men. On the German side there were some 600,000 troops in two armies with ten corps — this was equal to 29 divisions. Facing them were around 500,000 American and 55,000 British soldiers in three armies with six corps, equalling 31 divisions.

When the opening artillery barrage ended, eight German armoured divisions and thirteen German infantry divisions struck out and attacked the troops of the five American divisions of Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges' First Army. The offensive began well, helped by a combination of surprise and bad weather. The low cloud hampered Allied air operations, making it difficult for them to fight back the combined might of the Panzer divisions. *Hohenstaufen*, fighting as part of the Sixth SS Panzerarmee headed north after breaking through the Losheim Gap alongside the Fifth Panzerarmee who then turned the other way and headed south.

The Sixth SS Panzerarmee attacked the USV Corps, which was commanded by Major General Leonard Gerow, at Elsenborn Ridge, but the Americans of the 2nd and 99th Infantry Divisions managed to hold their ground. At first the Allied commanders thought that it was a minor assault, but Eisenhower soon realised that he had completely underestimated the situation. He worked out that gaining control of the main road to the Meuse River was a critical part of the German plan, and so rushed the 101st Airborne Division to the strategically important towns of Bastogne and St Vith. The morning after they established a defensive line, the Sixth SS Panzerarmee arrived. Five days of heavy fighting then ensued, and the tide only turned in favour of the Germans when the LXVIth Corps (18th and 62nd Divisions) attacked from the east, and *Hohenstaufen* and the *Führerbegleitbrigade* came in from the north. The American troops then withdrew to regroup. Although the Germans entered St Vith on 23 December, they were too far behind schedule for the objective of taking Antwerp to succeed.

In the early stages of the offensive only parts of *Hohenstaufen* were engaged — these were the Artillery Regiment and the Reconnaissance Battalion. The rest of the division, however, was brought in after the capture of St Vith. For most of the offensive, *Hohenstaufen* fought alongside the 2nd SS Panzer Division *Das Reich*, and the Army's 560th Division under II SS Panzerkorps. To begin with, *Hohenstaufen* got further than any of the other SS divisions, but even so only reached Salmchateau, which was less than halfway to the Meuse River. The 12th SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend*'s advance had stalled and the 1st SS Panzer Division *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* had run out of fuel. Only *Das Reich* was still moving, but its movements were largely ineffective. One of the major weaknesses of Hitler's plan was that it relied on the Panzer divisions capturing American fuel dumps as they advanced. When this failed to happen, they had no reserve supplies to keep them moving.

Above: SS grenadier captured by the 82nd Airborne near Bra, five miles east of Manhay. Elements of *Das Reich* and *Hohenstaufen* were in the area at the time so he could be from either division.

Above left: Map of the German advances in the Ardennes. *Hohenstaufen* started in the north but was moved south to help take Bastogne.

Below left: German troops make their way through the heavily wooded Ardennes: these are obviously not too close to the combat!

As the defence of Bastogne drew to a close, American forces prepared for a counter-offensive — this was intended to strike out in a pincer movement to trap German units before they could withdraw from the region. The strike-back began two days before New Year, on 29 December 1944. The plan was for the US Third Army to push north, while at the same time the US First Army moved south. The intention was that they would meet at the village of Houffalize and, in doing so, would encircle a high proportion of the German forces.

On 31 December *Hohenstaufen* handed its positions over to the 12th Infantry Division and went south to help in a final desperate assault on the town of Bastogne. Despite a heavy onslaught, the American forces stood their ground, and when the weather improved a massive Allied air bombardment turned the attack into a retreat.

Hohenstaufen was then ordered to make a fresh attack using both armour and infantry near Longchamps, Belgium, on 3 January 1945. This was part of a follow-up to an operation Hitler called the 'Great Blow', which was intended to remove Allied air superiority. Most of the remaining Luftwaffe was thrown at Allied air bases in an intense bombardment. The attack did a great deal of damage, and within two hours 206 British and American planes had been destroyed. While this was indeed a blow, the Allies were able to bring up replacements, whereas their German attackers no longer had the resources to do so. The Luftwaffe's total of 300 planes and 253 pilots lost signalled that this would be its last major offensive; this meant that the Luftwaffe was no longer able to provide much in the way of air support for the beleaguered German ground troops.

Below: German armour in winter camouflage.

Left and Below: Bastogne is remembered for being the hardest nut to crack in the Battle of the Bulge. *Hohenstaufen* was pulled south after the northern thrust failed, and took part — along with 12th SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend* and 340th Volksdivision — in the last German offensive in the Ardennes. The attack almost took Bastogne, pushed back US 6th Armored Division but was blunted by US artillery and lack of supplies. These photographs show German prisoners marching through Bastogne on 27 December (**Left**) and a unit of US 101st Airborne Division moving east toward the enemy on 29 December.

Above: A machine gunner of the 3rd SS Panzergrenadier Division *Totenkopf* chats to a Hungarian soldier in front of a Tiger II of 503rd schwere Panzer Abteilung. Note the tubes carrying spare machine-gun barrels slung over his shoulder. *Totenkopf* reached Budapest airport in an attempt to rescue the 45,000 troops in the city but was forced west.

The evening before *Hohenstaufen*'s attack on Longchamps took place one of the division's runners was captured by the Americans. In his possession was a case containing a full set of the attack plans. These detailed where and when the assault was to take place, and so American artillery was concentrated on the exact staging points, causing considerable damage to men and equipment. The attack went ahead despite the losses, but once again Allied airpower was too strong and the advance was slowed to a crawl. During this action *Hohenstaufen*'s 19th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment captured nearly 40 American paratroops.

By 8 January Hitler could see that both of his plans — the ground push through the Ardennes and the air offensive — were failures. Consequently, he ordered his troops to withdraw. The Allies then launched an assault on the morning of 9 January to cut the St Vith–Houffalize road — the intention being to prevent the Germans from being resupplied. As American troops moved cross-country through deep snow, they came under fire in the St Pierre–Hez forest near Bihain from tanks, artillery and anti-aircraft guns belonging to troops of the *Hohenstaufen*. A brief but fierce battle then broke out, during which time the Americans continued to advance; in doing so they flushed out and captured or killed many German soldiers. Some of these had been taking cover in foxholes covered with branches. The heavy fall of snow had covered the hideouts, and when the troops broke free they found themselves in American-held territory, and surrendered.

The Allies continued to push the German forces back, and short of fuel as well as men and equipment, Hitler ordered his troops to withdraw from the tip of the Bulge in mid-January. This decision was forced when the US First and Third Armies successfully joined up at Houffalize on 16 January. By 18 January the Americans had taken the upper hand, and the German forces were under the threat of being cut off by a northwards thrust by the US 4th Armoured Division. *Hohenstaufen* suffered heavy casualties in the Houffalize bottleneck where it tried to delay the Americans for long enough to allow other retreating German forces to escape. Before long the Allies controlled the original front prior to 16 December. On 23 January, St Vith was retaken, and on 28 January the offensive was officially over.

Overall, the Ardennes Offensive was a disaster. For a start the roads through the dense forests between Malmedy and St Vith were not suited to the passage of heavy armour. To complicate matters further, the Americans wasted little time in blowing up all the main bridges. This meant that the heavy armour had to travel further than anticipated, which resulted in major fuel shortages. Progress was far too slow for the operation to succeed, and this gave the Allies enough time to organise a robust defence. Both *Hohenstaufen* and *Das Reich* did their best to press home the attack, but under the circumstances the offensive was doomed from the start.

When the offensive ended, 81,000 US troops had been injured and 19,000 killed. The British suffered 1,400 wounded and 200 killed, and the Germans lost 100,000 killed, wounded or captured. The losses experienced by the Waffen-SS were so heavy that they were no longer officially listed as divisions, but rather as *Kampfgruppen* (battle groups). For the Allies it had been expensive in both men and materials, but at this stage in the war they had lots of newly trained soldiers and vast quantities of supplies. For the Germans, however, it was a catastrophe — they lost most of their dwindling resources, and had very little left over to defend their homeland.

HUNGARY

After the collapse of the Ardennes Offensive, *Hohenstaufen* was sent to the Kaufenheim-Mayen area for a refit. There the division enjoyed a brief spell of rest and rehabilitation, but since the Sixth SS Panzerarmee was listed as an OKW reserve, it was soon back in action. This time the division was sent east. Two SS divisions — the 8th SS Cavalry Division *Florian Geyer* and Hungarian 21st SS Cavalry Division *Maria Theresa* — had become encircled in Budapest by the Red Army, and Sixth SS Panzerarmee was needed to help them break out. They were moved to Falubattyan at the end of February, but terrible weather and poor roads prevented them from getting through to the Danube in time to be of any help to their besieged comrades. The Red Army put up stiff resistance

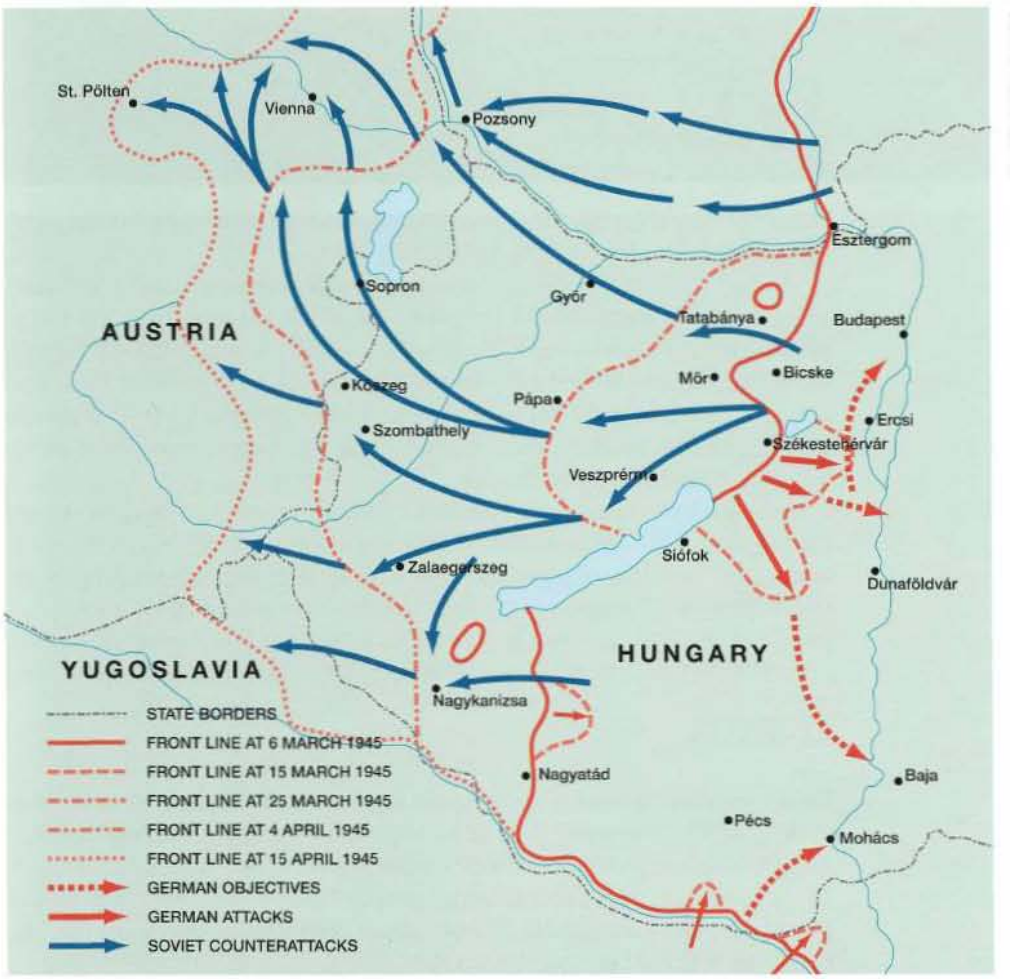
9th SS PANZER REGIMENT
1 February 1945

Regt HQ and HQ Company

1 x Battalion
Bn HQ
4 x PzKpfw V Panther companies

1 x Battalion
Bn HQ
2 x PzKpfw IV companies
2 x Sturmgeschütz companies

Vehicles:
26 x PzKpfw IV
28 x StuG III
31 x PzKpfw V Panther
4 x Flakpanzer IV



Left: The German intended (dotted red arrows) and actual (red arrows) advances in Hungary in early 1945 were halted by the Red Army who then thrust deep into the west.

around the town of Sarosd, and then struck back decisively, severing the German supply lines to the north of Lake Velencei on 16 March.

All the German units in the area fared badly, but *Hohenstaufen* suffered particularly heavy losses. This forced Sixth SS Panzerarmee to retreat, but when Hitler was told he went into one of his furious tirades, claiming that the men had not tried hard enough. He ordered the 1st, 2nd, 9th and 12th divisions of the Waffen-SS to surrender their prized cuff-bands. One story has it that some men did, indeed, remove their bands. They placed them in a chamber pot, along with a severed arm, and sent the whole ensemble back to Berlin; the rest simply ignored the order.

Once again the remnants of *Hohenstaufen* fought a rearguard action, allowing many other German units to get away. Many of these battles were extremely heavy, and as they were pushed back they retreated past Jeno, Berhida, Liter, Nemesvamos, Hidekut and then to Mencseli. The Red Army then staged another offensive, driving the division back past Zalaapati, Sojtor and Paka to the *Reichsschutzstellung* (Reich protective position) — a defensive barrier on the south-east of the Reich — near Radkersburg.

AUSTRIA

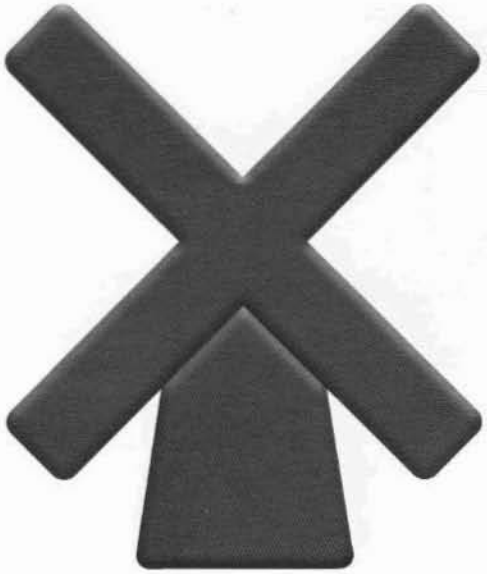
The remaining components of *Hohenstaufen* had been formed into two *Kampfgruppen*, under Sixth SS Panzerarmee. After fierce battles with the Soviets they left Vienna on 13 April, and then on 26 April they were ordered to move to Amstetten to help delay the American advance. After this they were moved to the Enns-Steyr-Amstetten area on 1 May, where they surrendered to the Americans as part of the capitulation of all German forces; they marched into captivity on 8 May.

Left: Waffen-SS troops watch an SdKfz 11 halftrack towing a 75mm Pak 40.

HOHENSTAUFEN CHRONOLOGY

Period	Korps	Armee	Armeegruppe	Area
1.43–4.43	forming	-	D	Reims, Ypern
5.43–8.43	forming	15. Armee	D	Ypern
9.43–12.43	forming	-	D	Ypern
1.44–2.44	Reserve	-	D	Ypern
3.44	Reserve	19. Armee	D	South France
4.44	XXXXVIII	4. Panzerarmee	Nordukraine	Tarnopol
5.44–6.44	Reserve	4. Panzerarmee	Nordukraine	Tarnopol
7.44	II. SS	Panzergruppe West	B	Normandy
8.44	II. SS	5. Panzerarmee	B	Normandy
9.44	rebuilding	-	B	Arnhem
10.44	II. SS	1. Fallsch. Armee	B	Arnhem
11.44	rebuilding	BdE	-	Westphalia
12.44	Reserve	6. Panzerarmee	OB West	Ardennes
1.45	II. SS	6. Panzerarmee	B	Eifel
2.45–3.45	not mentioned	-	-	moving to Hungary
4.45	XXII.	2. Panzerarmee	Süd	Hungary

EQUIPMENT, MARKINGS AND CAMOUFLAGE



Above: *'Hohenstaufen'* divisional emblems — the most frequently used from the division's inception is at left; the variant at right was used in 1945.

INSIGNIA AND CAMOUFLAGE

Hohenstaufen vehicles were often identified by the H and sword insignia seen above left painted in yellow or white on AFV hulls near the driver's plate. In 1945 there were variations to this including a windmill. In combat, however, many of these identification features were camouflaged or painted out as were other identification features such as tank numbers. Vehicle insignia has been well covered in the Spearhead series — readers are recommended to read the Insignia sections in *1 21st Panzer Division* and *9 Das Reich*. Vehicle camouflage was of particular importance to *Hohenstaufen* in its fighting around the Normandy beachhead, around Falaise and in the retreat to Germany. With Allied air superiority over the battlefield, and Allied tank-busters roving the area looking for business, all Panzer movements had to be made carefully where possible under the cover of darkness or suitable camouflage — as will be seen from many of the photographs in this book; see pages 23, 42 and 50 for examples of natural camouflage.

Above: Re-enactment *Hohenstaufen* unit alongside SdKfz 251 with divisional emblem on front of vehicle.

Left: There are no obvious unit markings on this *Hohenstaufen* Panzer IV Ausf J.

Right: Waffen-SS commander of an SdKfz 251 halftrack confers with a Hauptsturmführer. Frame antennae were used on a number of 251 versions including 251/3 (*mittlerer Funkpanzerwagen* medium radio vehicle), 251/6 (*mittlerer Kommandopanzerwagen* medium command vehicle), 251/12 (*mittlerer Gerätpanzerwagen* medium artillery survey vehicle) and 251/18 (*mittlerer Beobachtungspanzerwagen* medium observation vehicle).

Below right: Waffen-SS SdKfz 251 personnel carrier with 7.92mm MG34 and armoured shield to protect the gunner as introduced on the Ausf C. Note the white paint used to provide snow camouflage.

Above: SdKfz 233 heavy, eight-wheeled armoured car. Main armament is a short-barrelled 75mm.

Left: Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht troops aboard an NSU Kettenkrad.

Left: *Hohenstaufen* Hummel on a rail car. Artillery support to panzer divisions came from such equipment as the *schwere Panzerhaubitze auf Fahrgestell PzKpfw III/IV* — a heavy armoured howitzer with a 150mm sFH18/1 L/30 gun on PzKpfw III/IV chassis.

Above: SdKfz 182 Jagdpanther on the western front 1944. Armed with an 88mm Pak43/3 L/71 and a hull-mounted 7.92mm MG, the largest concentration of Jagdpanthers used in the war was in December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge.

Below: The PzKpfw VI Tiger I was the mainstay of the heavy tank battalions. Fewer than 1,500 were built but they took a heavy toll of enemy on all fronts.

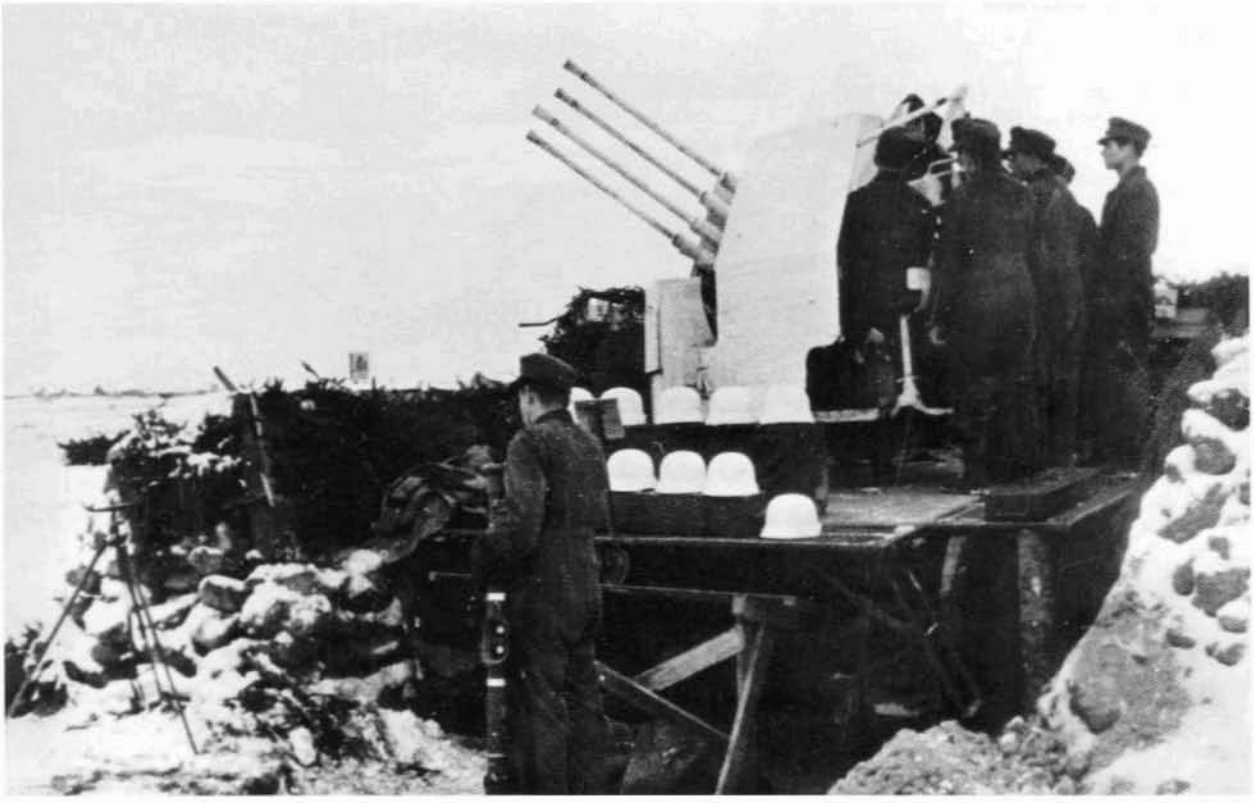
Below **left:** Jagdpanzer IV/70 with a 75mm gun.

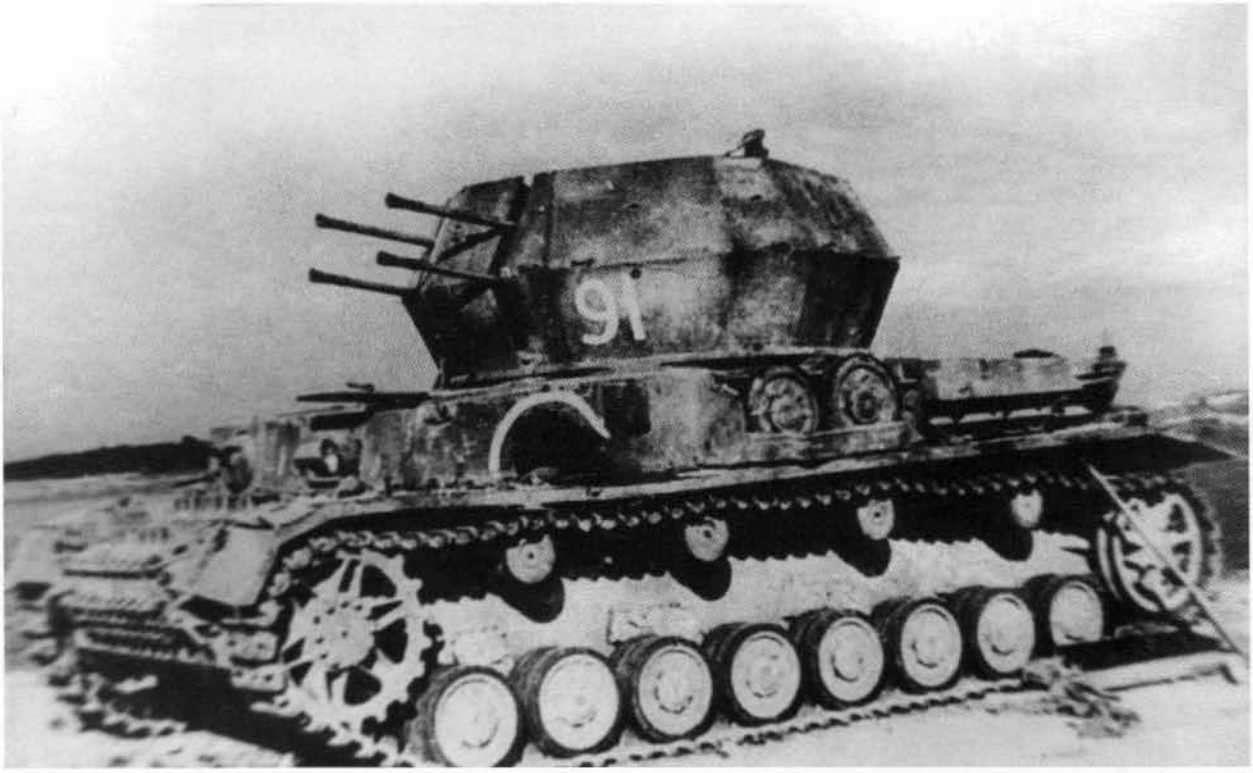
Above left: Nearly 7,750 StuG III Ausf Gs were built from December 1942.

Below left: The upgunned version of the StuG was the StuH — *Sturmhaubitze* — 42, over 1,200 of which were built before the end of the war. It was armed with an L/28 105mm howitzer.

Right: PzKpfw V Panthers being loaded onto flatcars to be shipped to the front.

Below: Crews of a Pzkpfw V Ausf A and an Sdkfz 251/6 Ausf D confer.




91

VEHICLES

The Waffen-SS Panzer divisions tended to get the best equipment available to German armed forces. However, *Hohenstaufen* — formed late in the war and involved in heavy fighting from the start — was often under-strength, particularly after the battle for the Falaise pocket. It can be quite difficult to be precise about actual tank strengths in any combat unit. At any one time there are vehicles in workshops, being replaced from reserve, etc. One of the best coverages of the subject is George F. Nafziger's monumental work on German orders of battle (see Bibliography). He shows *Hohenstaufen* formed with one battalion of PzKpfw V Panthers and one of PzKpfw IVs, receiving later 12 Wespe SP 105mm guns, and later still, a Sturmgeschütz Battalion. In April 1944, Hohenstaufen's Panzer Regiment had:

PzKpfw IV	StuGs	Flak 38 (t)
49	44	12

This was improved before D-Day to:

PzKpfw IV	PzKpfw V	StuGs
46	79	40

After Normandy the division was reorganized with a Panther battalion (four companies, each with 14 PzKpfw Vs) and a mixed battalion (two companies each of 14 PzKpfw IVs and two companies, each with 14 StuGs.

Above: 20mm Flak38 on an SdKfz 10/4 or 5 being used in the ground-support role. Note the gas mask containers, entrenching tools, and water bottle attached to belt.

Above left: Quadruple 20mm Flak on the Eastern Front.

Below left: Flakpanzer IV/2cm Vierling Wirbelwind.

Right: The *Hohenstaufen* cuff-title.

Below right: The commander of a Tiger I displays the characteristic black uniform of the Panzertruppen with the pink Waffenfarbe piping around his collar patches and epaulettes. The Panzergrenadier beside him is wearing two types of autumn camouflage clothing with a 'bread bag' suspended from his equipment belt. *Simon Dunstan*

On 12 September 1944 the Panzerjäger (anti-tank) battalion received 28 Jagdpanzer IVs. Heavy fighting in September meant further refitting and reforming and by 2 January 1945 the division had:

PzKpfw IV	PzKpfw V	Flak Pz IV	StuGs
26	31	4	28

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Waffen-SS uniforms and equipment have been well covered in other titles in the Spearhead series. The colour sections in *5 Leibstandarte* and *9 Das Reich* show well the camouflage combat uniforms used so extensively in Normandy and the Ardennes.

As with many of the Waffen-SS divisions, Hohenstaufen men wore a cuff-title (illustrated above right) on the left sleeve of their tunics under the SS arm eagle. They consisted of a black cloth band edged with silver braid and, as was the case with Hohenstaufen, with the unit's name on it.

The photographs that accompany this section show a variety of personal infantry weapons and anti-tank equipment—including (right) the best machine gun of the war, the MG42 7.92mm, and the excellent 75mm Panzerabwehrkanone 40 anti-tank gun. Designed by Rheinmetall Borsig, it was the standard German divisional anti-tank gun.

Below: As the war progressed German air superiority became a thing of the past and German Panzers were increasingly masked by foliage against ground-attack aircraft known to the German troops as 'Jabos' — a contraction of *Jagdbomber*, or fighter-bomber. One crewman was usually tasked with scanning the skies for Jabos, with the dreaded Russian Shturmovik and British Typhoon being the worst culprits. *Simon Dunstan*

Hohenstaufen

R4

Above left: The hull machine gunner/radio operator sits atop the turret of his Tiger I at the outset of an operation. The turret and hull sides of German Panzers were covered with *Zimmerit* — a corrugated paste — to prevent the attachment of magnetic anti-tank charges. *Simon Dunstan*

Left: Re-enactment scene showing Waffen-SS men in a Hanomag SdKfz 251/1 Ausf D preparing to advance with a Tiger I in support. The Panzergrenadiers in the forground display an interesting mix of Waffen-SS camouflage suits. The SdKfz 251 was the standard half-track of the Wehrmacht. Never produced in sufficient numbers to equip all units, it did reach the elite Waffen-SS formations and Panzer divisions such as *Hohenstaufen*. *Simon Dunstan*

Above: SS Panzergrenadiers march towards the front lines with their characteristic field equipment of gasmask holders, mess tins and water bottles. Their weapons include the 7.92mm Karabiner Kar98k carbine, the 9mm Solothurm SI-100 submachine gun and the Panzerfaust one-shot disposable anti-tank weapon that entered production in October 1943 at a rate of 200,000 a month.

Right: A good view of the Waffen-SS helmet runes.

Above and Below left: Anti-tank teams were essential on either front. These pictures show a typical Pak 40 on the Eastern Front.

Below: A Waffen-SS MG34 team.

Above: Waffen-SS troops fire a 50mm mortar.

Left: German machine gun team.

Above right: Waffen-SS troops. Lead man carries an MP40 SMG and the man at right an Einstossflammenwerfer 46 flamethrower.

Right: SS soldier with a 7.92mm Karabiner 98K.

Far right: The Nebelwerfer was a multi-barrelled mortar that grew in importance and numbers as the war progressed. They were organised in brigades and attached to larger units. This example is a 150mm Nebelwerfer 41.

PEOPLE

Above: SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich of II. SS Panzerkorps.

SS-OBERGRUPPENFÜHRER WILHELM BITTRICH

Born: 26 February 1894 in Wernigerode
Died: 19 April 1979 in Wolfratshausen
Iron Cross 2nd Class (clasp): 25 September 1939
Iron Cross 1st Class (clasp): 7 June 1940
German Cross in Gold: 6 March 1943
Knight's Cross: 14 December 1941
With Oakleaves: 23 August 1944
With Swords: 6 May 1945

Wilhelm Bittrich was of the prewar Reichswehr clan, and as such rose to become one of the most influential characters in the Waffen-SS. He began his tenure in the SS in 1932, with the SS-Fliegerstaffel Ost, although he originally started his military career as a fighter pilot during World War I. After this he went on to command the 74 Standarte, a unit that was part of the Allgemeine-SS, until he was appointed by Himmler to be the head of the *Politische Bereitschaft* (Political Readiness Squad) on 25 August 1934. This detachment was later expanded, whereupon it became known as the Regiment 'Germania'—at this time Bittrich took over as the commander of the 2nd Company. He moved to the Regiment 'Deutschland' in October 1936, where he was the commander of the IInd Battalion. He took over as head of the 1st 'Der Führer' Regiment when it was created in early 1938, and then transferred to the *Leibstandarte* on 1 June 1939, where he served as HQ Adjutant to Sepp Dietrich. He remained there throughout the Polish campaign and then, in February 1940, he moved to the replacement section of the SS-Verfügungstruppen. On 14 December of the same year, he returned to the 2nd SS in the Regiment 'Deutschland', where he took over as regimental CO. Whilst serving in this role he was awarded the Knight's Cross, and later took over from Obergruppenführer Paul Hausser when he lost an eye in combat. Bittrich himself fell ill in January 1942 and had to step down from being divisional commander to recover. He was then transferred to become commander of the SS-Kavallerie Brigade on 1 May 1942.

He remained with the brigade until early 1943, overseeing its expansion to divisional size. He then moved on again, this time taking over command of the newly formed 9th SS Panzergrenadier Division, shortly before it was renamed *Hohenstaufen* on 19 March 1943. As with his previous unit, he supervised its expansion, building it up to full strength and ensuring that its troops were properly trained. He then took over as commander of

COMMANDERS OF THE 9th SS PANZER DIVISION *HOHENSTAUFEN*

Obergruppenführer Willi Bittrich	15 February 1943–29 June 1944
Oberführer Thomas Müller	29 June 1944–10 July 1944
Brigadeführer Sylvester Stadler	10 July 1944–31 July 1944
Oberführer Friedrich-Wilhelm Bock	31 July 1944–29 August 1944
Standartenführer Walther Harzer	29 August 1944–10 October 1944
Brigadeführer Sylvester Stadler	10 October 1944–8 May 1945

Chiefs of Staff

SS-Standartenführer Werner Ostendorff	June 1942–December 1943
SS-Standartenführer Rüdiger Pipkorn	December 1943–October 1944
SS-Obersturmbannführer Baldur Keller	October 1944–May 1945

Left: An earlier view of Bittrich as an SS-Gruppenführer.

Right: A well-known image of Sturmbannführer Sylvester Stadler in Russia, March 1943, before he became CO of *Hohenstaufen*.

the II SS Panzerkorps after Hausser left to run Seventh Army. Bittrich stayed in this position to the end of the war, and his successful defence of the Arnhem area was one of the reasons why the Allied operation 'Market Garden' failed. He was rated as one of the most chivalrous officers of the Waffen-SS.

SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER SYLVESTER STADLER

Born: 30 December 1910 in Steiermark, Austria
Died: August 1995
Iron Cross 2nd Class: 25 September 1939
Iron Cross 1st Class: 26 June 1940
Knight's Cross: 6 April 1943
With Oakleaves: 16 September 1943
With Swords: 6 May 1945

Sylvester Stadler trained as an electrician at technical school before joining the Austrian SS when he was 23. The SS transferred him to Germany for training where he later became a platoon leader in the SS-Standarte 'Deutschland'. He was sent to the officer training school at Bad Tölz in 1935 and graduated at the rank of SS-Untersturmführer. He served in the Panzer Division 'Kempf' during the Polish campaign, and then in 1940, he was transferred to the Regiment 'Der Führer' to become its company commander. On 20 September 1941 he was moved back to the 'Deutschland' where he commanded the 2nd Regiment 'Deutschland'. He was then wounded in action and sent back to Germany where he instructed at the officer training schools at Bad Tölz and Braunschweig.

By March 1942 he was considered well enough to return to front line duty, and he was assigned to the 'Der Führer', initially as commander and then as battalion commander. Whilst in this role he was awarded the Knight's Cross for his superb leadership during the winter 1941/spring 1942 battles for Kharkov. He stayed with the 'Der Führer' for some time and became regimental commander in June 1943, where he led his men throughout the battles at Kursk and the Mius River. The quality of his leadership was once again recognised and he was awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross.

Just before he left 'Der Führer' a large number of civilians were massacred at Oradour by his men, and he asked for a court martial to clear himself from any involvement. This took place in June 1944, under Brigadeführer Lammerding, and it was found that he was not directly connected with the tragic events that took place. Indeed, the findings stated that Stadler 'enjoys great trust with his superiors, comrades and subordinates'. The same judgement also determined that he was an uncomplicated person with an open character who was neat and precise in his work, and was exemplary in both personal attitude and conduct. It went on to say that he proved to be above average in both his mental and physical abilities, that he was suitable for service in the higher army command.

He was then given command of the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen* in May 1944, but was seriously wounded during the fighting in Normandy. When he was fully recovered, he took over command of the division once again, rising to the rank of SS-Brigadeführer. Just before the war ended he was decorated again, this time being awarded the Swords to the Knight's Cross. During his time as a senior SS officer Stadler was recognised by his men for his bravery, and proved himself to be an outstanding leader — often doing so from the front.

Above: Obersturmbannführer Walther Harzer was *Hohenstaufen*'s Ia (operations officer) and was made temporary commander awaiting appointment of a new commander to replace Standartenführer Sylvester Stadler, who had been wounded in Normandy on 29 July.

Below: SS-Obersturmbannführer Ludwig Spindler.

SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER WALTHER HARZER

Obersturmbannführer Walther Harzer took temporary command of the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen* when he was only 32 on 29 August 1944. He held the post until 10 October 1944. During this period the division was in Normandy, and it got involved in some very heavy fighting. When it was trying to hold back the tanks of the US First Army at Cambrai on 2 September 1944, Harzer and his HQ became isolated from the rest of the unit when Allied armour cut through the lines. He and his men managed to escape in a convoy of vehicles under cover of darkness, and after several days of hiding from the enemy finally rejoined the division near Brussels.

The division was then moved to Arnhem to prepare for a refit. On Sunday, 17 September, just as they were due to move on to Germany, the first sounds of the massive Allied airborne assault on the area were heard. At this time Harzer was on parade in Hoenderloo. He later said that, 'As the troops were moving off to their quarters and the officers and myself were making for the officers' mess for lunch, we saw the first British parachutes in the sky over Arnhem. It could not be deduced at this stage that a large-scale operation was under way and we sat down quietly to lunch.'

As a result of the offensive, Harzer missed out on going home for his birthday celebrations, which annoyed him. Nevertheless, he did not hold this against the British when he was asked to help organise a truce to evacuate the wounded after some very heavy fighting. A British medical officer called Warrack was brought to him under the cover of a white flag, and Harzer said that, 'I spoke to Warrack who requested that the British wounded be evacuated from the perimeter since they no longer had the room or the supplies to take care of them. This meant calling a truce for a couple of hours. I agreed because ... I liked the English. I had been in England before the war as a student and had good memories of this time. I told Warrack that I was sorry that our two countries should be fighting. Why should we fight, after all? Warrack looked very haggard and worn. He was offered some cognac but refused because he said it would make him ill. He had not eaten for some time. He was given some sandwiches.'

Harzer gathered together a ragged group of railway workers, Arbeitsdienst and Luftwaffe personnel to fight the British and Polish troops, and was very proud of the way they performed. He was awarded the Knight's Cross for his superb leadership during this period; it was presented to him by Bittrich. As a person, Walther Harzer preferred the simpler things in life, and had a particular love of mechanical things. He would, for instance, rather take an engine apart than read a book.

SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER LUDWIG SPINDLER

Obersturmbannführer Ludwig Spindler became commander of the *Hohenstaufen*'s Artillery Regiment at the age of 34. When he took over the unit he was a very experienced officer, having already seen a considerable amount of action. At the Battle of Arnhem he led the Kampfgruppe 'Spindler', and his leadership played an important part in the defeat of the Allied airborne troops. On the first day of the conflict, his men managed to hold a stretch of the defensive line between the railway station and the lower Rhine. In response to the size of the Allied assault force, extra troops were drafted in at short notice. This increased the Kampfgruppe's strength enough to be able to fight off the Allies' attempts to break through. He was awarded the Iron Cross and Bar, as well as the German Cross in Gold.

GERMAN MEDALS AND AWARDS

Although the troops of the *Hohenstaufen* only faced combat for just over a year, they still earned their fair share of awards. The most famous medal winners were people like SS-Standartenführer Sylvester Stadler, who won the Iron Cross (1st and 2nd Class), as well as the Knight's Cross which was later supplemented by the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross and then by the Swords to the Knight's Cross. SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Wilhelm Bittrich was another recipient of the Iron Cross (1st and 2nd Class with Bar), as well as the Knight's Cross. He was also awarded the Cross of Honour 1914–1918, the 1914 Wound Badge (Black) along with the SS Honour Ring and the SS Honour Sword.

The Iron Cross

The lowest of the German medals was known as the Iron Cross, 2nd Class. This award was instituted on 1 September 1939, and was open to both men and women of any rank within the Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS or the auxiliary service organisations. This included foreign nationals who were serving as volunteers in the Wehrmacht or the auxiliary services, or if they belonged to units fighting alongside German forces. It was given for a single act of outstanding combat bravery that was deemed to be above and beyond the call of duty. As a result, it was the commonest of all the German medals, with over three million being awarded during World War II. In normal use, it was worn on a ribbon which was attached to the second button hole of the tunic. On formal dress occasions, however, it could be detached and displayed on a medal bar.

The Iron Cross, 1st Class was also instituted on 1 September 1939. In order to be eligible, candidates (who could be men or women from the Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS or the auxiliary service organisations) had to have already won the 2nd Class award. They then had to perform between three and five outstanding actions of combat bravery deemed to be above and beyond the call of duty. In all, over 450,000 were awarded during World War II. The medal itself was worn on the lower left breast of the individual's uniform.

The Knight's Cross

In all there were 12 Knight's Crosses awarded to *Hohenstaufen* soldiers. These were very highly regarded medals which were more properly known as the Knight's Cross to the Iron Cross. They were awarded either for individual heroism or for the performance of an entire unit, in which case it was given to the commanding officer. They could be won by any serving member of any branch of the Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS or the auxiliary service organisations, be they officers or men. The Knight's Cross was usually only awarded if the recipient had already won the Iron Cross 1st Class, and was given for 'outstanding actions of combat bravery above and beyond the call of duty'. During World War II there was a total of 7,361 Knight's Crosses given out; of these, 438 went to members of the Waffen-SS.

The Knight's Cross with Oakleaves

For those who had earned particular distinction, the Knight's Cross could also be awarded with various additions. The first of these was known as the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves. Like the Knight's Cross itself, it could also be given to individuals or unit commanders, including foreigners. During World War II there were a total of 890 Knight's Crosses with Oakleaves given out, of which 74 were given to the Waffen-SS.

Several members of the *Hohenstaufen* won this highly acclaimed medal, including SS-Oberführer Friedrich-Wilhelm Bock, who was presented with his award on 2 September 1944 following his outstanding leadership during the Normandy battles — especially those around the Falaise pocket, during the summer of 1944.

SS-Obersturmbannführer Otto Meyer received his award on 30 September 1944, in recognition of the quality of his leadership and for his daring on the battlefield. Other *Hohenstaufen* winners included Hauptmann Wilhelm Kohler (awarded on 4 October 1944) and SS-Obersturmbannführer Otto Paetsch (awarded on 5 April 1945).

The Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords

The Knight's Cross with Oakleaves and Swords was an even higher award which was given to commanders in recognition of their unit's valour in action. Out of a total of 160 that were awarded during World War II, 24 went to members of the Waffen-SS, including that which was won by the *Hohenstaufen*'s SS-Standartenführer Sylvester Stadler.

Above: SS-Hauptsturmführer Klaus von Allworden.

SS-HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER KLAUS VON ALLWORDEN

SS-Hauptsturmführer Klaus von Allworden commanded the Kampfgruppe 'von Allworden' at the Battle of Arnhem. This was an infantry unit which was put together out of the remains of the dismounted tank destroyer crews of the *Hohenstaufen*'s Panzerjäger Abteilung 9. At this time its strength was made up from 120 men, two SP guns and a few 75mm towed anti-tank guns. When it arrived in the area, the unit approached Arnhem from the north side. It was first active along the Dreyenseweg where it fought with the British 1 and 3 Parachute Divisions, initially ambushing and then preventing them from breaking through the defensive lines.

SS-HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER HANS MÖLLER

SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Möller was the commander of the *Hohenstaufen*'s Pionier Battalion at the time of the Battle of Arnhem. He knew the general area of operations, having fought in Arnhem and Oosterbeek in May 1940 during the invasion of the Netherlands when he was a sergeant in the SS Regiment 'Der Führer', commanding an engineer platoon. During the Allied operation 'Market Garden', his unit fought alongside the Kampfgruppe 'Gropp' for several days near the railway station just to the east of the Den Brink park. Their defensive line linked up with that of the Kampfgruppe 'Spindler', and in holding it they experienced very heavy house-to-house fighting. Under Möller's leadership the unit held out, holding back the Allied attempts to break through.

SS-HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER PAUL GRÄBNER

SS-Hauptsturmführer Paul Gräbner was commander of the *Hohenstaufen*'s Aufklärungs Abteilung (Recce Battalion). At the Battle of Arnhem he was in good spirits, having just been awarded the Knight's Cross at Hoenderloo, on 17 September by Obersturmbannführer Walther Harzer. This decoration was awarded in recognition of his leadership during the unit's armoured counter-attacks against a British breakthrough at Noyers Bocage in Normandy. At Arnhem he was ordered to cross the Rhine and look for Allied paratroopers. When he returned to the bridge, he found that the north end had been captured by the British 1st Airborne, and attempted to fight his way across. Even though he commanded the heaviest concentration of armoured vehicles in the area, he completely underestimated the strength of his opponents. As his men drove over the bridge, the British opened up with a variety of light assault weapons, destroying the vehicles and killing most of the men, including Gräbner himself.

Below: SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Möller.

OBERSTURMFÜHRER HERBERT ESCHER

Obersturmführer Herbert Escher commanded part of a *Funkkompanie* (radio company) in *Hohenstaufen*'s signals battalion. He originally joined the SA in September 1931, and later belonged to the of the SS-Nachrichten (signals) Sturmbann. He was a signals platoon NCO in the Aufklärungs Abteilung in the *Das Reich* division when it fought in Russia until mid-December 1941. Later in the war he commanded the *Hohenstaufen*'s radio company from September 1944 until the war ended in May 1945.

OBERSTURMFÜHRER GERD KNABE

Obersturmführer Gerd Knabe joined the SD in 1940 at the age of 17, when he was offered a free university education. He wanted to qualify as a lawyer, but during the

welcoming speech from Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, he and his fellow recruits were told that they first had to complete a tour of military duty. He took part in Operation 'Barbarossa', and was lucky to be one of the few survivors of the particularly fierce fighting that his unit — the 6th SS Gebirgs Division *Nord* — experienced on 1 July 1941, when it attacked heavily defended Soviet emplacements.

Above: SS-Hauptsturmführer Paul Gräbner

Below: The German commanders who had destroyed the British airborne side of Operation 'Market Garden' at Arnhem at the *Hohenstaufen* command post on 29 September. L-R: Generalfeldmarschall Model, Generaloberst Student, SS-Obergruppenführer Bittrich, Major Knaust and SS-Brigadeführer Harmel of the 10th SS Panzer Division *Frundsberg*. At the start of the meeting Model presented Knaust with the Knight's Cross.

ASSESSMENT

Hohenstaufen never achieved the high profile that many of the other SS Panzer divisions established. One of the main reasons for this is that the unit did not see combat until relatively late in the war — as a result, it only existed as a fighting unit for less than a year and a half. It did, however, become known as a division that would deliver a tough fight, no matter how bad its losses were. In spite of the general perception that SS forces were barbarous killers, the *Hohenstaufen* do not appear to have had any legitimate claims made against them of this sort of behaviour. Indeed, probably the most famous episode concerning their approach to humanity occurred at Arnhem, where they agreed to a two-hour cease-fire to evacuate the wounded. They also treated the British prisoners extremely well, and so the question must be asked as to why they did not 'fit the SS mould' in this respect.

Perhaps the first issue that should be tackled is whether the SS's reputation for being bloodthirsty murderers was really justified. It is certain that many SS units were indeed guilty of consistently brutal behaviour, and as such were the perpetrators of war crimes and atrocities. It should be understood, however, that most of these were not Waffen-SS, but belonged to other elements of the SS organisation. This does not mean that all the Waffen-SS units behaved honourably: two of the most famous mass killings of prisoners were carried out by their troops. At Oradour, for instance, members of the *Das Reich* Division murdered large numbers of French civilians, and at Malmedy, soldiers from the *Hitlerjugend* executed many defenceless American prisoners.

It could be said that one reason why the troops of the *Hohenstaufen* do not appear to have participated in any war crimes is that the vast majority were only young men. While their tender age is not in question, it must be remembered, however, that most of the soldiers of the *Hitlerjugend* were also relative youngsters. The significant difference here, though, was that the ranks of the *Hohenstaufen* were mostly composed of people who had been drafted in, often against their wishes. They generally only fought out of a sense of duty to their families and their homeland and, at the end of the day, because they had no choice. On the other hand, the *Hitlerjugend* was staffed by fanatics who had been thoroughly indoctrinated from an early age.

It should not be thought, however, that the troops of the *Hohenstaufen* were anything but merciless killers on the

HOHENSTAUFEN AREAS OF OPERATIONS

Eastern Front, southern sector	May 1943–August 1943
Italy	August 1943–October 1943
Balkans	October 1943–December 1943
France	December 1943–March 1944
Eastern Front, southern sector	March 1944–June 1944
France & Netherlands	June 1944–December 1944
Ardennes	December 1944–January 1945
Hungary & Austria	January 1945–May 1945

battlefield. There are stories that during the Battle of the Bulge German tanks were used to crush Allied soldiers in their foxholes, and in one incident a radio operator called Lawrence Silva was killed by carbon monoxide exhaust fumes when a tank was deliberately positioned over his hole and the engine revved up.

The official records compiled at the time do not indicate the true level of morale amongst the troops of the *Hohenstaufen*. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that towards the end of the war, although most of the troops fought on, there were many cases of suicides and desertions. One incidence of suicide was referred to in the regimental diary as the death of a 'mental patient'.

The troops that did fight on did so for many reasons. Some had lost all their families, friends and loved ones, and so continued out of a pathological desire to fight to the end — they were often referred to as '*Verückte Helmut*', or 'crazies'. Others knew that the brutal treatment of foreign civilians meted out by the Germans and their allies would be repaid if invading soldiers reached the German homeland, and so they fought to protect their own people.

A *Hohenstaufen* veteran — SS-Sturmmann Wolfgang Dombrowski, speaking of the battle at Arnhem — said that 'we believed the war was probably over', and yet he said that, 'Life's deeper issues did not concern us too much. We were prepared to fight on.' The Allied declaration that only an unconditional surrender would be accepted encouraged many German troops to carry on fighting as they had little to lose. A common saying at the time went, 'Enjoy the war while you can, because the peace will be terrible!' Those members of the *Hohenstaufen* who were captured before the war ended often impressed their captors with their behaviour. At Arnhem their willingness to help treat the wounded of both sides earned a lot of respect for the division.

Like all the other elite fighting units of the German Army, *Hohenstaufen* suffered massive numbers of casualties. This was largely because they were used as 'last action' forces, where only desperate fighting could save the day. In the battle for the Falaise Gap, for instance, the division was all but destroyed. One veteran, who fought in the Kampfgruppe 'Möller' at the Battle of Arnhem, remembered that afterwards there were only seven men left out of a unit that had originally been formed two years earlier from 874 soldiers. It is thought that around 250,000 SS troops were killed in World War II, and a further 400,000 were wounded. It is not known how many deserted or committed suicide.

Above: The face of battle: Waffen-SS soldier in 1945.

REFERENCE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agte, Patrick: *Michael Wittmann and the Tiger Commanders of the* Leibstandarte; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1996.

Angolia, John R. (assisted by Stan Cook); *Cloth Insignia of the SS*, 2nd edition; R. James Bender Publishing, 1989.

Angolia, John R.: *For Führer and Fatherland: Military Awards of the Third Reich*, 3rd edition; R. James Bender Publishing, 1987.

Bando, Mark: *Breakout at Normandy: The 2nd Armoured Division in the Land of the Dead*; MBI Publishing, 1999.

Carius, Otto: *Tigers in the Mud*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1992.

Chamberlain, Peter and Ellis, Chris; *Axis Combat Tanks*; Arco Publishing, 1977.

Davis, Brian L. and Westwell, Ian.: *Third Reich Cloth Insignia*; Ian Allan Publishing, 2003.

Duffy, Christopher: *Red Storm on the Reich: The Soviet March on Germany, 1945*; Da Capo Press, 1993.

Fey, Willi: *Armour Battles of the Waffen-SS 1943-45*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1990.

Furbringer, Herbert: *9. SS-Division "*Hohenstaufen*" 1944: Normandie-Tarnopol-Arnhem*; Editions Heimdal, 1984.

Gilbert Adrian: *Waffen SS an Illustrated History*; Brompton Books. London 1989.

Kershaw, Robert J.: *'It Never Snows in September': The German View of "Market Garden" and The Battle of Arnhem, September 1944*; Ian Allan Ltd, 1994.

Kleine, Egon and Kuhn, Volkmar: *Tiger: The History of a Legendary Weapon 1942-45*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1989.

Landwehr, Richard: *Narwa 1944: The Waffen-SS and the Battle for Europe*; Bibliophile Legion Books, 1981.

Lefevre, Eric: *Panzers in Normandy Then and Now*, 2nd edition; After the Battle, 1990.

Lumsden, Robin: *SS Regalia*; Grange Books, London 1995.

Nipe, George: *Last Victory in Russia: The SS-Panzerkorps and Manstein's Kharkov Counteroffensive February-March 1943*; Schiffer Military History, 2000.

Pallud, Jean Paul: *Battle of the Bulge Then and Now*, 2nd edition; After the Battle, 1986.

Perrett, Brian: *The Tiger Tanks*; Osprey Publishing, 1990

Reynolds, Michael: *Sons of the Reich: The History of II SS Panzer Corps*; Spellmount Publishers Ltd, 2004.

Rikmenspoel, Marc: *Soldiers of the Waffen-SS*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1999.

Sydnor, Charles W. Jr: *Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division, 1933-1945*; Princeton University Press, 1990.

Tieke, Wilhelm: *The Caucasus and the Oil: The German-Soviet War in the Caucasus 1942/43*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1995.

Tieke, Wilhelm: *In the Firestorm of the Last Years of the War, II. SS-Panzerkorps with the 9. and 10. SS-Divisions "Hohenstaufen" and "Frundsberg"*, J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1999.

Walther, Herbert: *The Waffen-SS: A Pictorial Documentation*; Schiffer Military Publishing, 1990.

Winter, George: *Freineux and Lamormenil: The Ardennes*; J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, 1994.

Yerger, Mark C.: *Waffen-SS Commanders: The Army, Corps and Divisional Leaders of a Legend: Augsberger to Kreutz*; Schiffer Military History, 1997.

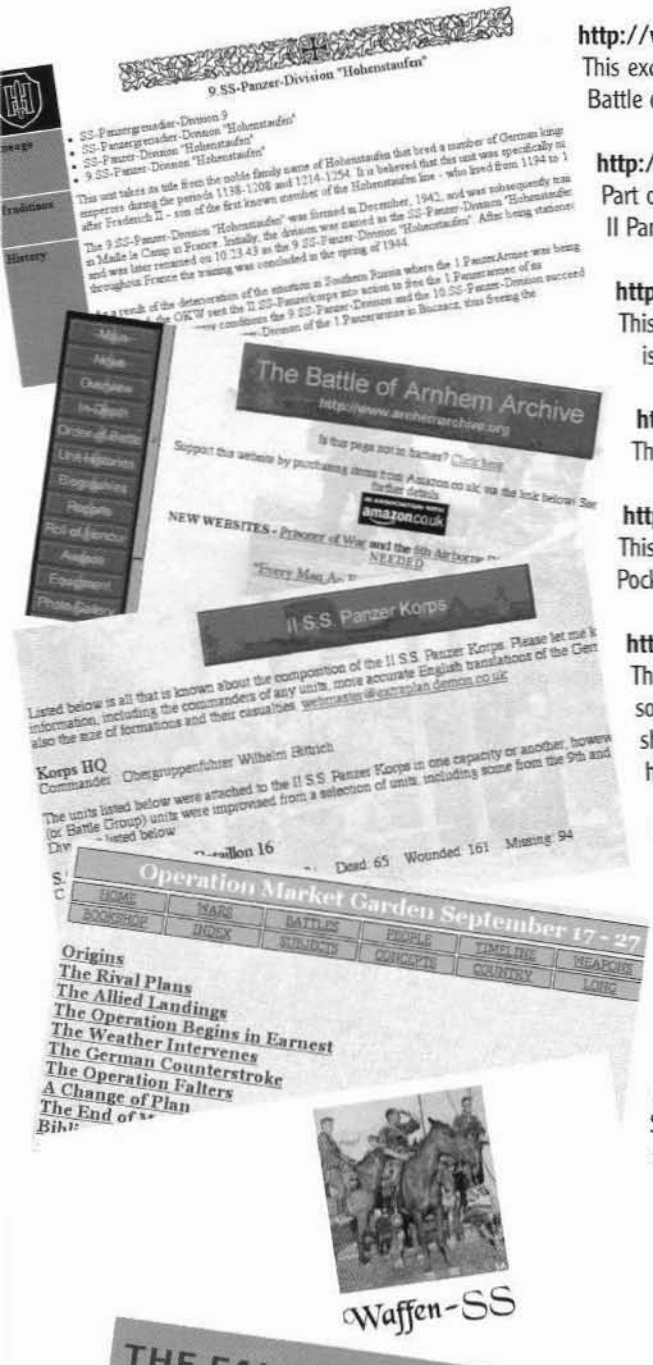
INTERNET

http://www.militaria-net.co.uk/Waffen%20SS%20Divisions.htm
This page gives a complete listing of the Waffen-SS Divisions, including the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen*. It shows their symbols, when they were formed and their peak troop strengths.

http://www.feldgrau.com
This is an excellent German military history research website. It focuses on the operational histories of the German armed forces between 1918 and 1945.

http://www.feldgrau.com/9ss.html
Part of the feldgrau.com website, this page focuses on the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen*.

The Origins of the Waffen SS
Volk
For 100% original militaria
For Waffen SS Reproduction Insignia
Visit our new online store
Feldgrau.com - research on the German armed forces 1918-1945



http://www.arnhemarchive.org

This excellent website presents all manner of detailed information about the Battle of Arnhem.

http://www.arnhemarchive.org/order_2SS.htm

Part of the arnhemarchive.org site, this page covers the Order of Battle of II Panzerkorps.

http://www.rickard.karoo.net/articles/battles_arnhem.html

This is another excellent website which covers the Battle of Arnhem — it is enormously detailed and well worth a visit.

http://www.axishistory.com/index.php?id=49

This website is dedicated to the history of the Third Reich and its Allies.

http://www.normandywebguide.com/falaise_pocket.htm

This website gives an excellent in-depth review of the Battle of the Falaise Pocket, and includes maps and documentary photographs.

http://www.101airborneww2.com/index.html

This website was created by World War II historian Mark Bando, who is solely responsible for its contents. Most of the photos and artefacts shown are from his personal collection and the layout and writing are his unless otherwise unless otherwise noted.

Especially recommended from this website is the war stories page which can be viewed at:

http://www.101airborneww2.com/warstoriesintro.html

RE-ENACTMENT GROUP WEBSITES

http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Bunker/2480/

This is the website for the 9 Re-Enactment Society, which is a group of military history enthusiasts. They portray combat soldiers of the 9th SS Panzer Division *Hohenstaufen* at public displays and private re-enactments.

http://www.hohenstaufen.org/

This is the website for the 9th SS Panzer Division Historical Group, and it serves to provide information about the military traditions, customs and structure of the Waffen-SS soldier for the enthusiast and re-enactor. It also acts as an excellent reference resource for the history and the traditions of the *Hohenstaufen*.

http://9sshohenstaufen.com/frontpage.htm

This is the website for a re-enactment group which is based in the Michigan area. It portrays the *Hohenstaufen* at public educational exhibitions, lectures displays and re-enactments of typical battles fought between the Allied and Axis forces in WWII.

MUSEUMS

There is a small museum dedicated to Operation 'Bluecoat' at 14350 St. Martin-des-Besaces, Muse de la Perce du Bocage. Located in the village of Saint-Martin on N 175, about 10 km south of Caumont. Open Sundays 14:00 to 18:00 June to September. Tel : 02 31 67 52 78

INDEX

Allied units: **Polish**—1st Armoured Division, 28. **British**—I Airborne Corps, 33; 1st Airborne Division, 32–52, 88; First Allied Airborne Army, 33; 3rd Infantry Division, 26; 7 RTR, 20; 8th Rifle Brigade, 26; 8th Armoured Brigade, 33; VIII Corps, 20; 9th Brigade, 26; 11th Armoured, 20, 26; 15th Scottish, 20; 21st Army Group, 33; 23rd Hussars, 26; XXX Corps, 33, 37, 45, 47; 31st Tank Brigade, 20; 43rd (Wessex) Infantry Division, 20, 33, 49, 51, 52; 46th (Highland) Brigade, 20; 50th (Northumbrian) Division, 33; 52nd (Lowland) Division, 33; 53rd Welsh, 20; 185th Brigade, 26; Grenadier Guards, 41, 48; Guards Armoured Division, 26, 33; Irish Guards, 37, 46. **Canadian**—3rd Infantry Division, 4th Armoured Brigade. 20; 20; Black Watch of Canada, 26; Cameron Highlanders, 26. **Dutch**— Royal Netherlands Brigade 'Princess Irene', 33. **Polish**—1st Independent Parachute Brigade, 33; **Soviet**— First Soviet Tank Army, 16; 1st Ukrainian Front, 14. **US**—First Army, 57, 58, 60, 86; 2nd Infantry Division, 57; Third Army, 26, 58, 60; 4th Armored Division, 60; 6th Armored Division, 59; 9th Infantry Division, 10, 57; Eighth Air Force, 33; 82nd Airborne Division, 33, 34, 37, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48; 101st Airborne Division, 33, 34, 43, 47, 49, 57, 59.

Allworden, Klaus von, 88

Ardennes Offensive, 53–61

Arnhem, 7, 13, 32–52, 63, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94

Bad Tölz, 11, 13, 84

Bastogne, 57, 58, 59

Bittrich, Wilhelm, 7, 28, 36, 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 53, 82–4, 86, 87, 89

Bock, Friedrich-Wilhelm, 29, 32, 83, 87

Brandenberger, Erich, 53

Budapest, 60, 61

Delfs, Hermann, 46

Dietrich, Josef 'Sepp', 52, 53, 82

Elsenborn Ridge, 57

Escher, Herbert, 88

Falaise, 22, 26–28, 31, 64, 73, 87, 91, 94

Frost, John, 42, 44, 48

German units: **Armee**—First Fallschirmjäger, 33, 47, 63; First Panzer, 14, 16; Second Panzer, 32, 63; Fourth Panzer, 16, 63; Fifth Panzer, 27, 53, 57, 63; Sixth SS Panzer, 32, 52, 53, 54, 57, 61, 62, 63; Seventh, 27, 29; Fifteenth, 7, 8, 33, 37, 63; Nineteenth, 63. **Armeegruppe**—B, 32, 33, 42, 53, 63; D, 7, 63; Nordukraine, 16, 63; South, 14. **Brigade**—Führerbegleitbrigade, 57; 107th Panzer, 33; Sturmgeschütz 280, 34, 38, 42, 47, 51. Panzer Abteilung— 301st FKL, 55; 501, 55; 502, 20; 503, 60; 506, 34, 55; Hummel, 34; 244, 34. Panzergruppe West, 63. **Division**—1st SS Panzer *Leibstandarte*, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, 53, 55, 57, 62, 74, 82, 92; 2nd Panzer Division, 29; 2nd SS Panzer *Das Reich*, 22, 26, 53, 57, 60, 62, 64, 74, 88, 90; 3rd Fallschirmjäger, 29, 53; 3rd SS Panzergrenadier *Totenkopf*, 60; 5th SS Panzer *Wiking*, 8; 8th SS Cavalry *Florian Geyer*, 61; 9th SS Panzergrenadier *Hohenstaufen*, 6–7; 10th SS Panzer/Panzergrenadier *Frundsberg*, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20, 32, 35, 36, 37, 41, 43, 48; 12th SS Panzer *Hitlerjugend*, 11, 14, 18, 20, 28, 32, 34, 53, 57, 59, 62, 90, 92; 12th Infantry, 58; 16th SS Panzergrenadier *Reichsführer-SS*, 8; 18th, 57; 21st SS Cavalry Division *Maria Theresa*, 61; 59th Infantry, 33; 62nd, 57; 84th Infantry, 29; 116th Panzer, 29; 176th Infantry, 33; 180th Infantry, 33; 190th Infantry, 33; 226th Infantry, 29; 227th Infantry, 29; 245th Infantry, 33; 326th Infantry, 24, 29; 346th Infantry, 33; 349th Infantry, 14; 353rd Infantry, 29; 363th Volksgrenadier, 33; 560th Infantry, 57; 711th Static, 33; 712th Static, 33; 719th Coastal, 33; 'Erdmann', 33. **Kampfgruppen**—'Chill', 33; 'Euling', 13, 48; 'Frundsberg', 13, 48; 'Hanke', 13, 48; 'Gropp', 88; 'Harzer', 13, 41, 44, 49, 53; 'Meyer', 26, 27; 'Möller', 39; 'Peiper', 55; 'Spindler', 13, 37, 43, 46, 88; 'von Tettau', 13, 33, 44; 'Walther', 33; 'Telkamp', 26; 'Weiss', 26. **Korps**—I SS Panzer, 8, 14, 52, 53, 54, 55; II Fallschirmkorps, 33; II SS Panzer, 8, 14, 16, 18, 20, 26, 28, 29, 33, 36, 41, 52, 53, 54, 57, 63, 82, 84, 91, 93; IV SS, 7; XII SS, 33; XXXXVIII, 16, 63; LXVI, 57; LXVII, 33; LXXXVIII, 33; LXXXVI, 33.

Gräbner, Paul, 42, 45, 88, 89

Groesbeek Heights, 34, 46

Harmel, Heinz, 43, 89

Harzer, Walter, 29, 41, 45, 46, 50, 52, 83, 86, 88

Hausser, Paul, 8, 11, 13, 14, 29, 82, 84

Himmler, Heinrich, 6, 9, 82

Hitler, Adolf, 6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60, 62

Keller, Baldur, 83

Kerutt, Helmut, 37

Knabe, Gerd, 88

Kraft, Sepp, 36, 38

Mackay, Eric, 42

Manteuffel, Hasso von, 53

Meindl, 29

Meyer, Otto, 16, 27, 87

Model, Walther, 32

Möller, Hans, 39, 44, 88, 91

Müller, Thomas, 83

Nijmegen, 34, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49

Oosterbeek, 34, 37, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 52, 88

Operations: 'Barbarossa', 6, 89; 'Bluecoat', 20–4; 'Charnwood', 20; 'Jupiter', 20; 'Market Garden', 32–52, 54–55, 84; 'Overlord', 16; 'Spring', 26; 'Wacht am Rhein', 53–61

Ostendorff, Werner, 18, 83

Pipkorn, Rüdiger, 83

Reichsarbeitsdienst, 7, 9

Skalka, Egon, 50

Sosabowski, Stanislaw, 51

Spindler, Ludwig, 37, 86, 88

Stadler, Sylvester, 13, 20, 28, 32, 53, 83, 84–5, 86, 87

Student, Kurt, 41, 42, 47, 89

Tanks: 68–74; Cromwell, 20; Flakpanzer IV, 31, 61, 73; Flammpanzer, 34; Jagdpanzer IV, 22, 25, 34, 69, 74; M4 Sherman, 18, 22; PzKpfw III, 34; PzKpfw IV, 4, 12, 22, 25, 26, 31, 34, 61, 65, 69, 73, 74; PzKpfw V Panther, 8, 24, 34, 61, 71, 73, 75; PzKpfw VI Tiger I, 20, 34, 49, 50, 53, 55, 69, 92; PzKpfw VI Tiger II, 34, 55, 60; PzKpfw 35S, 34; Sturmgeschütz III, 5, 22, 30, 34, 38, 39, 42, 47, 51, 61, 71, 73; Sturmhaubitze 42, 71; JS-2, 14

Tettau, Hans von, 43, 44

Thompson, John, 37

Tilly, Gerald, 51

Urquhart, Roy, 50, 51

Volz, Heinz, 34

Warrack, Dr. Graeme, 50, 51, 86

Two other great series from Ian Allan Publishing Ltd...

Tanks in Detail 1: PzKpfw IV Ausf A to J - Panzer IV
J Forty - edited by G Forty
ISBN: 07110 2931 8

Tanks in Detail 2: Stuart M3 - M3A1 - M3A3 - Stuart 1-V
J Forty - edited by G Forty
ISBN: 0 7110 2932 6

Tanks in Detail 3: PzKpfw V Ausf A, D & G Panther
J Forty
ISBN: 0 7110 2941 5

Tanks in Detail 4: Medium Tank M3 to M3A5 General Lee/Grant
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 2983 0

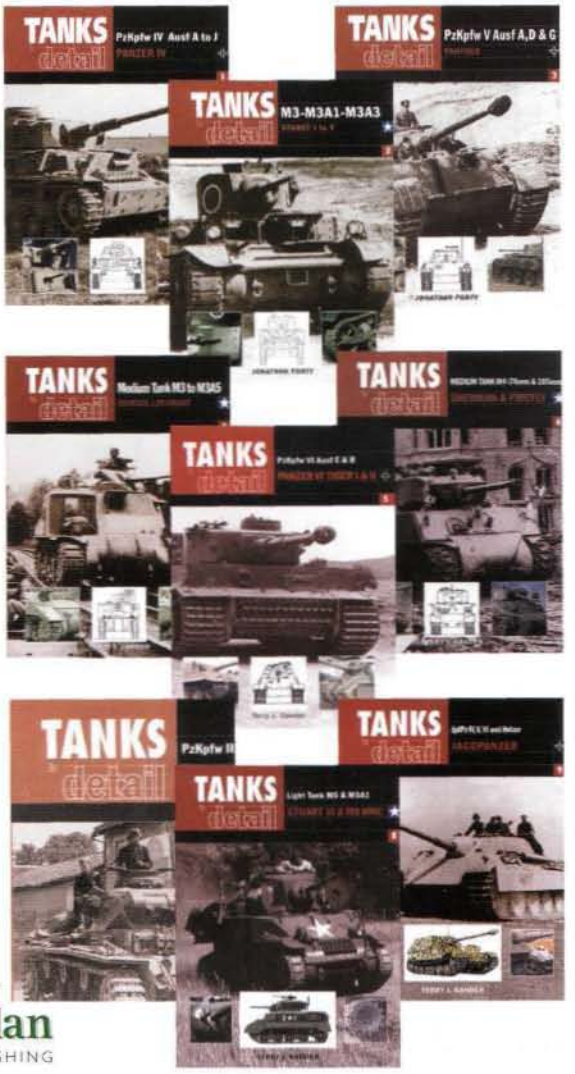
Tanks in Detail 5: PzKpfw VI Ausf E & B Panzer VI - Tiger I & II
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 2984 9

Tanks in Detail 6: Medium Tank M4 (76mm & 105mm) Sherman & Firefly
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 2989 X

Tanks in Detail 7: PzKpfw III Ausf A to N Panzer III
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 3015 4

Tanks in Detail 8: Light Tank M5/M5A1 - Stuart VI & M8 HMC
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 3016 2

Tanks in Detail 9: JgdPz IV - V - VI & Hetzer Jagdpanzer
T Gander
ISBN: 0 7110 3046 4



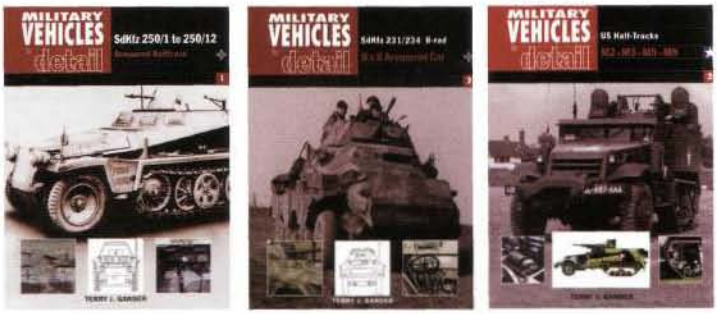
All titles in the 'Tanks in Detail' and 'Military Vehicles in Detail' series are: 248mm x 185mm 96pp inc colour PB £12.99

Ian Allan PUBLISHING

Military Vehicles in Detail 1: SdKfz 250/1 to 250/12 Armoured Halftrack
T Gander ISBN: 0 7110 2942 3

Military Vehicles in Detail 2: SdKfz 231 to 234 (8 RAD) 8 x 8 Armoured Car
T Gander ISBN: 0 7110 2990 3

Military Vehicles in Detail 3: US Half-Tracks M2 - M3 - M5 - M9
T Gander ISBN: 0 7110 3047 2



Order via post, fax or e-mail: Ian Allan Publishing Mail Order Dept, 4 Watling Drive, Hinckley, Leics LE10 3EY
Tel: 01455 254450 Fax: 01455 233737 E-mail: midlandbooks@compuserve.com
Order on-line from: www.ianallansuperstore.com

For order from the USA, contact:
Casemate Publishers and distributors, LLC 2114 Derby Road, 2nd Floor, Haverton, PA 19083, USA
Tel: +1 610 853 9131 Fax: +1 610 853 9146

SPEARHEAD

HOHENSTAUFEN

9th SS Panzer Division

Named after the house of the medieval Emperor Frederick II, Hohenstaufen fought on the Eastern Front in spring 1944 before moving to the west in June. Fighting first around Caen and then in the battle to keep the neck of the Falaise Pocket open, the division acquitted itself well, and continued to do so in the retreat through France and Belgium. Ordered for a refit at Arnhem, it arrived there on 9 September, 10 days before 'Market Garden' started. Hohenstaufen was the unit that was instrumental in keeping the advancing Allied thrust from making contact with British 1st Airborne Division in Arnhem. In reserve for the Battle of the Bulge, the division was committed to assist in the capture of Bastogne. Sent to Hungary in February 1945, Hohenstaufen fought against the Red Army up till its surrender on 8 May 1945 to the Americans.

About the author

Dr Patrick Hook has contributed to many military books, mainly on weapons and ammunition, including *Infantry Weapons of World War II* and *World War II Day By Day*. He is also known for his books on motorcycling (*Customizing Your Harley Davidson*) and natural history (*Butterflies and Moths, Seashells, The Natural World*). He lives in Devon and is currently working on a detailed encyclopedia of the ammunition used in World War II.

www.ianallanpublishing.com

ISBN 0-7110-3064-2

9 780711 030640

Printed in England

£14.99

SPEARHEAD

Spearhead looks at the cutting edge of war, units capable of operating completely independently in the forefront of battle. The series examines the units':

- Origins and history
- Organisation, order of battle and how this changed
- Battle history, theatre by theatre
- Insignia and Markings
- Top people – biographies of commanders and personalities

Each book ends with an assessment of unit effectiveness – as seen by itself, its opponents and the wider viewpoint of history – and a full reference section including:

- Critical bibliography
- Relevant museums or exhibits
- Website links
- Re-enactment groups
- Memorials